

International Anti-Street Harassment Week Participation Guide

Write an article or op-ed:

A great way to raise awareness about the problem of street harassment is to write an article or opinion-editorial (op-ed) for a community or school paper or for an online publication. Including a personal story in the article or op-ed can make it more powerful.

Articles can help inspire others to take action.

Success Story: In September 2010, journalist [Elizabeth Mendez Berry](#) wrote an op-ed about street harassment that was published in [El Diario](#).

New York City Council Member [Julissa Ferreras](#) read it. Then, in great part because of the article, Ferreras, as the chair of the [Committee on Women's Issues](#), called for an oversight hearing on the street harassment of women and girls in New York City on Oct. 28, 2010. ([Read the briefing paper.](#))

This was the first time an American city held a hearing on street harassment and it marked a huge step toward street harassment being treated as a serious problem by the mainstream media and legislators.

In the photo to the right, op-ed author Mendez Berry is seated in the center, preparing to testify at the October 2010 hearing.



Article & Op-Ed Examples:

These are some of the articles published to commemorate International Anti-Street Harassment Day 2011.

1. Shawna Potter, "[International Anti-Street Harassment Day](#)," for the Independent Reader
2. Hugo Schwyzer, "[Spring is not excuse for street harassment](#)," for Jezebel
3. Holly Kearl, "[Street harassment of women: It's a bigger problem than you think](#)," for the Christian Science Monitor
4. Gender Across Borders published three posts for the day: Kate Stence, "[Sport on the Street: How Harassment Pervades](#)," Anna Lekas-Miller, "[Penis in the Park with Pierre](#)," and Alison Hamm, "[The Shame & Blame Game: Fighting City Street Harassment](#)"

Here are three examples of articles written by college students in 2011 for their school papers:

1. Brittany Patterson, "[Catcalling should not be acceptable in our society](#)," for the Spartan Daily
2. Kate Ryrle, "[Street Harassment – The Daily Battle](#)," for The University of Leeds' paper
3. Tyler Brown, "[Catcalling obnoxious, harmful to both genders](#)," for the Kansas State Collegian

Special Offer from the Op-Ed Project

[The OpEd Project](#) works to increase the number of people, especially the number of women, writing op-eds (about 80% of op-eds are written by men).

As a partner for International Anti-Street Harassment Week, they are offering to help amplify the voices of people participating in International Anti-Street Harassment Week:

1. The OpEd Project will give a 10% discount to Anti-Street Harassment Week participants, to attend their day-long Core Seminar ([see the calendar](#)).
2. For every 5 Anti-Street Harassment Week participants who register before March 18, one person can receive a scholarship to attend a day-long Core Seminar ([see the calendar](#)).

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Info on Writing Op-Eds (from [The Op-Ed Project website](#)):

Basic Structure:

Lede (Around a news hook) (*e.g. International Anti-Street Harassment Week*)

Thesis (Statement of argument – either explicit or implied)

Argument: Based on evidence (such as stats, news, reports from credible organizations, expert quotes, scholarship, history, first-hand experience) – *Here is a [list of statistics on street harassment](#) and a [list of articles/books to reference](#). Also use your own experiences of street harassment or those in your community to help make your points.*

- 1st Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion

- 2nd Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion

- 3rd Point
 - evidence
 - evidence
 - conclusion

“To Be Sure” paragraph (in which you pre-empt your potential critics by acknowledging any flaws in your argument, and address any obvious counter-arguments.)

Conclusion (often circling back to your lede)

Tips:

1. **Own your expertise** Know what you are an expert in and why - but don't limit yourself. Consider the metaphors that your experience and knowledge suggest.
2. **Stay current** Follow the news – both general and specific to your areas of specialty. If you write about Haiti, read the Haitian press. If you write about pop culture, read the media that cover it.
3. **The perfect is the enemy of the good** In other words: write fast. You may have only a few hours to get your piece in before the moment is gone. But also...
4. **Cultivate a flexible mind** Remember that a good idea may have more than one news hook, indeed if the idea is important enough it can have many. So keep an eye out for surprising connections and new news hooks – the opportunity may come around again.
5. **Use plain language** Jargon serves a purpose, but it is rarely useful in public debate, and can obfuscate – sorry, I mean cloud – your argument. Speak to your reader in straight talk.
6. **Respect your reader** Never underestimate your reader's intelligence, or overestimate her level of information. Recognize that your average reader is not an expert in your topic, and that the onus is on you to capture her attention – and make the argument compel.

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