

Guidelines for presenting suicide Media reporting

1. Avoid sensationalizing or over-simplifying suicide

Don't label locations as 'hotspots' or a series of suicides as an 'epidemic.' Two or more suicides which share similarities may be a coincidence.

Avoid disclosing the contents of a suicide note. Doing so is unnecessary and dramatizes the suicide.

Avoid depicting suicide or suicide attempts as a means to achieve desired goals, such as changing the behaviours of others. Suicide should never be viewed as either 'carrot' or 'rod'.

Avoid implying correlation or the cause of suicide when it may be unclear. Suicide is a complex behavior which is often caused by a combination or intersection of factors.

2. Avoid prominent placement and undue repetition of suicide stories

Avoid positioning articles on suicide on the front page or lead bulletin as this may unduly influence vulnerable persons.

3. Avoid explicit details such as the method and circumstance involved in the suicide

Never comment on any method being easy, painless or certain to result in death.

Presenting explicit details of the circumstances under which the suicide occurred may cause others in a similar circumstance to view suicide as a natural course of action.

Presenting explicit details of the method of suicide used may act as a manual for others to follow. Reporting the general method of suicide (i.e. jumping) is expected, but explicit details are unnecessary (i.e. specific locations, level of building, etc.)

Take extra care when reporting the facts on a suicide which utilized an unusual or previously unknown means of suicide. Incidences of people using such unusual or new means of suicide can spread rapidly after being reported on widely.

4. Exercise caution in choice of wording and headlines

Avoid including graphic details of the suicide (including details on the method used) in the headline.

Avoid describing suicides as inevitable or without warning. Suicides are often preventable.

Avoid referring to suicide as 'successful', 'unsuccessful', or 'a failed attempt.'



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5. Exercise caution in choice of images and video footage

Never circulate images of a completed suicide or video footage of a suicide in progress. The graphic content may be triggering or adversely affect children and other vulnerable audiences.

Avoid putting up identifying images of the deceased or those related to the deceased. It will bring them additional undue trauma on top of facing their loss.

6. Exercise caution in reporting celebrity suicides

There may be a higher risk of unintentionally glamorizing suicide in the case of celebrities or high profile individuals. The potential for imitative, or copycat, suicides are greater in such cases, especially by those who hold that individual in high regard.

7. Show consideration for those bereaved by suicide

While most audiences will treat a media report as just that, any article published on suicide nonetheless concerns an individual's life. Those who are bereaved by the loss will also get to see the article. Respect for the deceased, their family, and their privacy should be accorded duly.

Avoid including any identifying information with regard to the deceased or their family.

8. Provide information on helping resources and encourage help-seeking

Suicide is at its core a public health concern.

Every opportunity should be taken to educate the public on the warning signs and helping resources available. Additionally, audiences should be made aware of credible sources where they can find more information on the topic should they require.

Help-seeking behavior should also be encouraged as those at risk of suicide or in need of help may also be reading the article but not know what steps they can take toward recovery.

Your report may potentially save a life.

