

MEDIA: On Reporting Suicide

What to AVOID

- detailed descriptions of the suicide, including specifics of the method and location.
- romanticizing someone who has died by suicide.
- featuring tributes by friends or relatives.
- first-person accounts from adolescents about their suicide attempts.
- glamorizing the suicide of a celebrity.
- oversimplifying the causes of suicides, murder-suicides, or suicide pacts, and avoid presenting them as inexplicable or unavoidable.
- overstating the frequency of suicide.
- using the words "committed suicide" or "failed" or "successful" suicide attempt.

What TO DO

- Always include a referral phone number and information about local crisis intervention services.
- Emphasize recent treatment advances for depression and other mental illness. Include stories of people whose treatment was life-saving or who overcame despair without attempting suicide.
- Interview a mental health professional who is knowledgeable about suicide and the role of treatment or screening for mental disorders as a preventive strategy.
- Emphasize decreasing trends in national suicide rates over the past decade.
- Emphasize actions that communities can take to prevent suicides.
- Report on activities coordinated by your local or state suicide prevention coalition.

EDITORS

What to Avoid

- Avoid giving prominent placement to stories about suicide.
- Avoid using the word "suicide" in the headline.
- Avoid describing the site or showing pictures of the suicide.

What to Do

- Suggest that all reporters and editors review Reporting on Suicide: Recommendations for the Media. These guidelines for responsible reporting of suicide were developed by a number of Federal agencies and private organizations, including the Annenberg Public Policy Center.
- Encourage your reporters to review examples of good and problematic reporting of suicide.
- Include a sidebar listing warning signs, or risk and protective factors for suicide.

RESOURCE

Safe Reporting Guidelines At-A-Glance; Suicide Prevention Resource Center • www.sprc.org/library/at_a_glance • 1-877-GET SPRC (1-877-438-7772)



SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL
of St. Joseph County and Surrounding Areas

For more information visit our website at
www.sjcsuicideprevention.com or call (574) 220-6381.

Crisis and Suicide Intervention

National HOTLINE
1-800-273-TALK

Local Help: Emergency Services
(877) 234-0061 toll free
(574) 234-0061 local

(operated by Madison Center)