

Suicide Prevention Safe Messaging Guidelines



There are more than 50 research studies to show that certain types of news coverage increases the likelihood of suicide. **What** we say, **how** we say it, and the **images** we use, can either increase risk or promote resiliency and encourage help-seeking.

Risk increases when the news story:

- Describes or shows the suicide methods
- Is repeatedly or extensively covered
- Uses dramatic or graphic headlines and images

Language Matters

AVOID	USE INSTEAD
Successful suicide	Took their own life
Committed suicide	Died by suicide
Chose to kill themselves	Ended their life

Instead of THIS:	Do THIS:
Big or sensationalized headlines, or prominent placement	Inform the audience without sensationalizing the suicide and minimize prominence
Including photos/videos of the location or method of death, grieving family, friends, memorials, or funerals	Use a school, work, or family photo and include the lifeline logo and/or local crisis phone numbers
Describing recent suicides as "an epidemic," "skyrocketing," or other terms	Carefully investigate the most recent CDC data and use non-sensationalized words like "rise" or "higher."
Describe a suicide as inexplicable or "without warning."	Include a "Warning Signs" and "What to Do" sidebar in your article if possible. Most, but not all, people die by suicide exhibit warning signs.

Call to Action



When news articles, entertainment programming, or other media materials include content that addresses *suicide, mental health, or emotional distress*, it's important to ensure that your audience has a clear, simple call to action if they or someone they know needs help or is in crisis.

Please update any end cards / boilerplate language that mentions the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or the previous 800-272-8255 number with one of the examples listed below:



- If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org/chat
- If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat at 988life.org/chat

Checklist For Reporting



- Report suicide as a public health issue
- Include resources
- Use appropriate language
- Emphasize help and hope
- Ask an expert



Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline

