



**REPORTING  
ON SUICIDE:  
*GUIDELINES FOR  
JOURNALISTS***

embrace



## REPORTING ON SUICIDE: GUIDELINES FOR JOURNALISTS

### ANY DEATH IS CONSIDERED A TRAGEDY, DEATH BY SUICIDE IS NO DIFFERENT.

Media reporting about suicide can either minimize the risk of imitative suicide or increase its risk depending on the way in which the suicide story was covered. The reporting might also affect the family and friends of the person. It is important for those reporting suicide to understand how to report it, in order to respect the privacy of the victim's family and not entice those who are at risk of suicide to replicate this action.

## REPORT SCIENTIFIC FACTS IN YOUR COVERAGE

1. Suicide is a public health issue that can be both treatable and preventable. The majority of suicide cases are the result of underlying mental health issues.

2. Suicide is multi-factorial. Avoid reporting that death by suicide was preceded by a certain event, such as job loss, bad grades or divorce as it leaves the public with an overly simplistic and misleading perception of suicide. Nor should you report suicide as inexplicable or 'without warning'. Always mention that there are multiple causes behind suicide, which could be treatable, like psychiatric illnesses for example.

3. Suicide is preventable. Many victims of suicide have exhibited warning signs. In your report, it is important to raise awareness about these signs. Visit [Suicide Psychoeducation](#) to learn more about them

4. Suicide is treatable. Always add statements about the various treatment options available, stories of those who overcame a suicidal crisis and resources for help along with information on how to overcome suicidal thinking and increase coping skills.

5. Suicide is associated with stigma. Encourage the reader to seek-help if needed and provide the available tools and resources to do so.



## OPTIMAL REPORTING: DO'S AND DON'TS POOR REPORTING OF SUICIDE IN THE MEDIA CAN HAVE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS AND LEAD TO COPY-CAT SUICIDES.

- Before sharing any social media post, check facts about suicide and avoid spreading myths.
- Don't use or share photographs or video footages or social media links.
- Don't describe or put images relating to the method used. Don't share or like posts that do.
- Don't speculate or share posts that speculate about the cause or trigger of a suicide, even if provided by close family or friends.
- Don't use simplistic explanations for suicide and avoid linking it to one single causal factor.
- Don't assume people who attempted suicide are weak or trying to seek attention. The person would be going through a severe emotional crisis that needs immediate support.
- Spread The Lifeline's number, 1564. Operators are ready to listen to persons who want to talk to someone or to persons who are worried about someone.
- Psychologists or suicide prevention professionals are best to be quoted as they can offer insights on how to report it and how to prevent it.

It is recommended that you cite The National Emotional Support and Suicide Prevention Helpline, The Lifeline, for individuals that need help to seek it. The Lifeline can be reached at 1564.

