



MESSAGING MATTERS

Tips for Safe and Effective Messaging on Suicide Prevention

1. PROVIDE A SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE

- Always include a resource such as:
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255
 - Crisis Text Line: TEXT “Home” to 741-741
- Describe the resources you are offering, and what to expect

2. EDUCATE THE AUDIENCE ABOUT WARNING SIGNS AND RISK FACTORS

- Include information about warning signs and life circumstances that can increase risk (risk factors)
- Visit suicideispreventable.org for a list of warning signs

3. AVOID DISCUSSING DETAILS ABOUT THE METHOD OF SUICIDE

- Avoid details that describe the suicide including weapon/method used, the specific location, and the location of the wound

4. EXPLAIN COMPLEXITY OF SUICIDE, AVOID OVERSIMPLIFYING

- Reference the complexity involved in suicide
- Avoid oversimplifying “causes” of suicide or pointing to one event as “the cause” of a suicide attempt or death
- Don’t speculate. It’s natural to want to answer the “why” involved in a suicide but rarely do we fully understand the reasons behind a suicide

5. FOCUS ON PREVENTION: AVOID SENSATIONAL LANGUAGE AND IMAGES

- Don’t use statistics that make suicide seem overly common
- Consider using positive statistics that highlight help-seeking such as number of calls to the local crisis line, or visits to a prevention focused website
- Use hopeful images that show people being supported, avoid images that show people suffering alone

6. HELPFUL RESOURCES

Know the Signs - for the public (www.suicideispreventable.org)

Reporting on Suicide - for the news media (www.ReportingOnSuicide.org)

Framework for Successful Messaging, National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
(www.SuicidePreventionMessaging.org)

Each Mind Matters Resource Center- to find and download suicide prevention resources in multiple languages and formats (www.EMMResourceCenter.org)



suicideispreventable.org

Funded by counties through the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63).

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