



From the Field



Responsible Reporting On Suicide San Diego

Risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic or graphic headlines or images, and repeated or extensive coverage sensationalizes a death. Covering suicide carefully, even briefly, can change public misperceptions and correct myths, which can encourage those who are vulnerable or at risk to seek help.



When reporting on suicide, do:

- ▶ Use your story to inform readers about the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, and on available resources to encourage help-seeking (see below and reverse)
- ▶ Seek advice and quotes from suicide prevention experts
- ▶ Include the Access & Crisis Line number (888) 724-7240 and www.Up2SD.org in all reports on suicide
- ▶ Report on suicide as a public health issue
- ▶ Offer hope—consider stories of those who overcame a suicidal crisis and resources for help



When reporting on suicide, avoid:

- ▶ Sensationalizing headlines, prominent placement
- ▶ Including photos or videos of the location or method of death, grieving family, friends, memorials, or funerals
- ▶ Describing suicide as inexplicable or without warning, or reporting that death by suicide was preceded by a single event, such as recent job loss, divorce, or bad grades
- ▶ Interviewing first responders or police about the causes of suicide
- ▶ Describing suicides as “epidemic” or other strong terms

INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS

Guidelines for media when reporting:
www.ReportingOnSuicide.org

Local suicide prevention experts and interviews:
Access & Crisis Line: (888) 724-7240

Local suicide prevention action plan:
www.Up2SD.org (Listed under “Resources”)

INCLUDE THESE RESOURCES IN ALL SUICIDE-RELATED MEDIA

Access & Crisis Line:
(888) 724-7240

It's Up to Us, San Diego:
www.Up2SD.org

Facts



- ▶ Suicide rates in San Diego County (as a proportion of the population) have declined substantially over the last 20 years.
- ▶ In 2010, there were 372 deaths by suicide in San Diego County.
- ▶ 90% of all people who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental illness at the time of their death and 60% of all people who die by suicide suffer from major depression--- the most treatable of mental illnesses.
- ▶ Suicide is a serious public health concern that cuts across boundaries of socio-economic class, age, gender, culture, and ethnicity, and is one of the most disruptive and tragic events a family and a community can experience.
- ▶ Suicide can be prevented! Public awareness of warning signs, risk factors, available resources and actions to take are essential to saving lives.



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
 **HHSA**
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Funded by the Mental Health Services Act

Provided on behalf of the San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council.

Risk Factors

- ▶ Previous suicide attempt
- ▶ Mental illness and/or substance abuse
- ▶ Recent losses, including a job, loved ones, role, status
- ▶ Access to lethal means
- ▶ Barriers to care

Warning signs

Call 9-1-1 or seek immediate help from a mental health provider when you hear or see any one of these behaviors:

- ▶ Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
- ▶ Someone looking for ways to kill themselves: seeking access to pills, weapons, or other means

If you are concerned about someone because their behavior has changed and they are exhibiting any of the warning signs of suicide listed below, seek help by calling the Access & Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240.

- ▶ Withdrawing from family and friends
- ▶ Acting reckless, hopeless, angry, or anxious
- ▶ Increasing their use of alcohol or drugs

What to Do

If someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

- ▶ Do not leave the person alone
- ▶ Remove any firearms, drugs, alcohol, or sharp objects that could be used in an attempt
- ▶ For life threatening emergencies or immediate response, call 9-1-1
- ▶ For urgent and all other concerns, contact the Access & Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240

For more information visit Up2SD.org