



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:

- ▶ Include the Access & Crisis Line number (888) 724-7240 and www.Up2SD.org in all reports on suicide as local resources
- ▶ 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
- ▶ 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 an “epidemic” or using other strong terms

INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS

Guidelines for media when reporting:

www.ReportingOnSuicide.org

Local suicide prevention experts and interviews:

San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council
www.SPCSanDiego.org

Local suicide prevention action plan:

www.Up2SD.org (Listed under “Resources”)

INCLUDE THESE PREVENTION RESOURCES IN ALL SUICIDE-RELATED MEDIA

Access & Crisis Line: (888) 724-7240

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

RESPONSIBLE REPORTING ON SUICIDE: San Diego

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

- ▶ Talking about wanting to die
- ▶ Looking for a way to kill oneself
- ▶ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- ▶ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- ▶ Talking about being a burden to others
- ▶ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- ▶ Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
- ▶ Sleeping too little or too much
- ▶ Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- ▶ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- ▶ Displaying extreme mood swings

The more of these signs a person shows, the greater the risk. Warning signs and risk factors are associated with suicide but may not be what causes a suicide.

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

GET THE FACTS

- ▶ 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 does not discriminate between socio-economic class, age, gender, culture or ethnicity. It 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.
- ▶ Help is available. San Diego has many mental health and suicide prevention resources, and effective treatment options. Recovery is possible.

Responsible Reporting on Suicide guidelines for San Diego were adapted from The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and www.reportingonsuicide.org/recommendations2012.pdf



Up2SD.org
LINK UP FOR INFORMATION AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



a project facilitated by:
COMMUNITY HEALTH
IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS
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Provided on behalf of the San Diego County Suicide Prevention Council.