

Guidelines for presenting suicide Media portrayals

1. Exercise caution in storyline, character, and method portrayals

Avoid portraying suicides as inevitable or without warning. Suicides are often preventable.

Avoid referring to suicide as 'successful', 'unsuccessful', or 'a failed attempt.'

Avoid presenting explicit details of the circumstances under which the suicide occurred. It may cause others in a similar circumstance to view suicide as a natural course of action.

Avoid portraying a suicide attempt in explicit detail as it may act as a manual for others to follow. The graphic content may also be triggering or adversely affect children and other vulnerable audiences.

Avoid depicting suicide or suicide attempts as a means to achieve desired goals, such as changing the behaviours of others. Suicide should never be viewed as either 'carrot' or 'rod'.

Never portray any method as being easy, painless or certain to result in death.

Help-giving professionals, such as counsellors, social workers, and medical workers, should be presented in an appropriate light and not be totally left out of the picture.

2. Exercise caution in promoting and publicising the programme

Publicity surrounding the programme should be cautious of being triggering or having an adverse impact on children, those bereaved by suicide, and other vulnerable audiences.

Publicity surrounding the programme should not sensationalise or glamourise suicide in a bid to attract the attention of audiences.

3. Provide information on helping resources and encourage help-seeking

Suicide is at its core a public health concern.

Every opportunity should be taken to educate the public on the warning signs and helping resources available. Additionally, audiences should be made aware of credible sources where they can find more information on the topic should they require.

Help-seeking behavior should also be encouraged as those at risk of suicide or in need of help may also be viewing the programme but not know what steps they can take toward recovery.

Your programme may potentially save a life.

