

MEDIA GUIDELINES

Because of its impact on society, how we talk about and report on deaths by suicide matters. Here is a brief guide to what reporters and editors need to know to cover suicide deaths responsibly.

The Dos and Don'ts about Reporting on Suicide in the Media:

DO educate the public about the facts of suicide and suicide prevention

DO consider the reason behind reporting on this death

DO look for links to broader social issues (e.g., poverty, substance use, etc.)

DO respect the privacy and grief of family or others

DO acknowledge the individual's challenges

DO encourage help-seeking behaviour

DO include resources, such as crisis service numbers, as well as education and training opportunities

DON'T shy away from writing about suicide. The more taboo, the more the myth.

DON'T romanticize the act or reasons for the suicide(s) (e.g., 'We want to be together for all eternity')

DON'T jump to conclusions. The reasons why people kill themselves are complex.

DON'T suggest nothing can be done to prevent suicide

DON'T go into details about the means used

DON'T cite simplistic reasons for suicide

DON'T use photographs, video footage or social media links

Your Choice of Language Matters:

DO use plain words like:

- The person 'died by suicide'
- The person 'killed themselves'
- The person 'took their own life'

DON'T say the person 'committed suicide' – it is an outdated term and implies illegality or moral failing

DON'T call suicide 'successful' or attempted suicide 'unsuccessful'.

DON'T use or repeat phrases such as 'the coward's way out' which reinforce myths and stigma

HELPFUL RESOURCES

For Immediate Risk: Call 9-1-1

For adults in crisis: Contact COAST
(Crisis Outreach and Support Team)
1-866-550-5205

For children and youth in crisis:
Contact Pathstone Mental Health
1-800-263-4944

For more information
and helpful resources,
visit our website at:
niagarasuicidepreventioncoalition.ca

24-Hour Supports:

COAST Niagara: 1-866-550-5205

Pathstone Mental Health Services: 1-800-263-4944

Distress Centre Niagara:

St. Catharines: 905-688-3711
Port Colborne/Welland: 905-734-1212
Beamsville/Grimsby: 905-563-6674
Fort Erie: 905-382-0689

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Jeunesse J'écoute: 1-800-668-6868

Hope for Wellness Help Line

for Indigenous Peoples: 1-855-242-3310

Crisis Services Canada (CSC): For chat support in
English and French (daily 4 p.m. – 12 a.m.):

Text: 45645 1-833-456-4566 (24/7)

ONTX: Text 'support' to 258258 between
2 p.m. and 2 a.m. daily

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The above guidelines are based in part on the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP); Mindset: Reporting on Mental Health, produced by the Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma; and Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals, update 2017. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017 (WHO/MSD/MER/17.5). Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. These dos and don'ts are intended to be general statements to aid in a responsible presentation of information about suicide.