BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

How the media depicts suicide and shares stories about related topics can influence the behaviors of the general public. Responsible reporting on suicide should be based on best practices, including safe and accurate language, hopeful messaging, and valid resources — which can ultimately save lives. We recommend referring to the guidelines and resources when working on a story that includes the topic of suicide.

WORDS AND LANGUAGE MATTER

Suicide is complex. It is a multi-factored, complex event that cannot be easily explained with any single answer or theory. Avoid conveying suicide as being based on one factor or attempting to pinpoint a single event or simplistic reason for being the cause of suicide.

Use nonjudgmental language. Refrain from terms that place blame, shame, stigma, or judgment, such as:

- *Committed suicide*
- *Successful suicide*
- *Failed suicide attempt*

Instead, use terms such as *suicide attempt*, *died by suicide*, or *death by suicide*.

Offer stories of hope. Refrain from including graphic content, shocking headlines, or details about failed programs, and instead highlight life-saving experiences and resources around suicide that focus on awareness, prevention, coping skills, and seeking help.

Inform viewers or readers in advance of sensitive content. This might read something like — *Content Warning: This story contains discussion of and content related to the topic of suicide*.

Provide resources. Educate and inform audiences that help is available. Reaching out and talking about suicide can save lives. Always include supportive resources, such as:

- *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 — Press 1 for the Veterans Crisis Line*
- *Crisis Text Line: Text SHARE to 741741*

Survivors of military suicide loss seeking grief support or assistance can call the 24/7 TAPS National Military Survivor Helpline any time at 800-959-TAPS (8277).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR JOURNALISTS REPORTING ON SUICIDE

National Recommendations for Depicting Suicide
Responsible Media Reporting
Reporting on Suicide Guidelines
Reporting on Suicide Prevention
Journalism & Trauma
Responsible Reporting on Suicide for Journalists
Journalism & Trauma Course by Poynter
Responsible Reporting on Suicide for Journalists by Johns Hopkins University

[MORE]

ABOUT TAPS SUICIDE PREVENTION AND POSTVENTION

The TAPS Suicide Prevention and Postvention Department addresses the challenge of suicide in the military, the veteran community, and across the nation. We draw from a powerful combination of clinical expertise, survivor experience, and TAPS' own best practices in peer-to-peer grief support to care for those who have lost loved ones to suicide by reducing risk through the life-saving work of the TAPS Suicide Postvention Model™. Access more information at taps.org/suicide.

ABOUT TAPS

TAPS is the leading national organization providing compassionate care and survivor support services for all those grieving the loss of a fallen military service member or veteran. Since 1994, TAPS has offered support to all those grieving the death of a military loved one through peer-based emotional support, connections with grief and trauma resources, grief seminars and retreats for adults, Good Grief Camps for children, casework assistance, connections to community-based care, online and in-person support groups, and the 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline, all at no cost to surviving families. Please visit taps.org or call 202-588-TAPS (8277) for more information.

###

BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING ON SUICIDE

How the media depicts suicide and shares stories about related topics can influence behaviors of the general public. Responsible reporting on suicide should be based on best practices, including safe and accurate language, hopeful messaging, and valid resources — which can ultimately save lives. We recommend using the guidelines and resources that follow when working on a story that includes the topic of suicide.

WORDS AND LANGUAGE MATTER

Suicide is complex. It is a multi-factored, complex event that cannot be easily explained with any single answer or theory. Avoid conveying suicide as being based on one factor or attempting to pinpoint a single event or simplistic reason that may have been the cause of suicide.

Use nonjudgmental language. Refrain from terms that place blame, shame, stigma, or judgment, such as:

- *Committed suicide*
- *Successful suicide*
- *Failed suicide attempt*

Instead, use terms such as *suicide attempt*, *died by suicide*, or *death by suicide*.

Offer stories of hope. Instead of focusing on graphic details, shocking headlines, or details about failed programs, highlight life-saving experiences and resources around suicide that focus on awareness, prevention, coping skills, and seeking help.

Warn viewers or readers in advance of sensitive content. Content Warning: This story contains discussion of and content related to the topic of suicide.

Provide resources. Educate and inform audiences that help is available. Reaching out and talking about suicide can save lives. Always include support resources, such as:

- *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 — Press 1 for the Veterans Crisis Line*
- *Crisis Text Line: Text SHARE to 741741*

Survivors of military suicide loss seeking grief support or assistance can call the 24/7 TAPS National Military Survivor Helpline any time at 800-959-TAPS (8277).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR JOURNALISTS REPORTING ON SUICIDE

National Recommendations for Depicting Suicide
Responsible Media Reporting
Reporting on Suicide Guidelines
Reporting on Suicide Prevention
Journalism & Trauma
Responsible Reporting on Suicide for Journalists
Journalism & Trauma Course by Poynter
Responsible Reporting on Suicide for Journalists by Johns Hopkins University

ABOUT TAPS SUICIDE PREVENTION AND POSTVENTION

The TAPS Suicide Prevention and Postvention Department addresses the challenge of suicide in the military, the veteran community, and across the nation. We draw from a powerful combination of clinical expertise, survivor experience, and TAPS' own best practices in peer-to-peer grief support to care for those who have lost loved ones to suicide by reducing risk through the life-saving work of the TAPS Suicide Postvention Model™. Access more information at taps.org/suicide.

ABOUT TAPS

TAPS is the leading national organization providing compassionate care and survivor support services for all those grieving the loss of a fallen military service member or veteran. Since 1994, TAPS has offered support to all those grieving the death of a military loved one through peer-based emotional support, connections with grief and trauma resources, grief seminars and retreats for adults, Good Grief Camps for children, casework assistance, connections to community-based care, online and in-person support groups, and the 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline, all at no cost to surviving families. Please visit taps.org or call 202-588-TAPS (8277) for more information.

###