

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2018

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With Suicides Safe Reporting is Essential to Preventing a Worse Situation

As our communities grapple with the tragedy of another teen suicide, we at Lines for Life want to remind reporters that what you say and how you cover suicides can have a massive impact.

More than 50 research studies worldwide have found that certain types of news coverage can increase the likelihood of suicide in vulnerable individuals. The magnitude of the increase is related to the duration and prominence of the coverage. Reasons for suicide are complex and multi-factored, sometimes resulting from what may be episodes of transitory despair and not necessarily deeply entwined with depression and mental illness. We can make matters better by pointing out in coverage that most people who experience suicidal thoughts recover.

We at Lines for Life are happy to be a resource in helping you report safely--and connect you with stories of hope and recovery essential to responsible reporting on suicide.

Here are some guidelines from the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention that can help provide hope and healing, and prevent contagion:

- Include stories of hope and recovery, information on how to overcome suicidal thinking and increase coping skills, and add stories of those who overcame a suicidal crisis
- Do not include method of suicide: risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic/graphic headlines or images, and repeated/extensive coverage sensationalizes or glamorizes death
- Report on suicide as a public health issue
- Seek advice from suicide prevention experts
- Describe as “died by suicide” or “killed him/herself/themselves”
- Carefully investigate the most recent CDC data and use non-sensational words like “rise” or “higher”
- Most, but not all, people who die by suicide exhibit warning signs. Include the “Warning Signs” and “What to Do” sidebar in your article if possible (see www.reportingonsuicide.org)

- 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

For more information on how to safely report go to: www.reportingonsuicide.org.

If someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

- Ask the person if they are thinking of killing themselves
- Do not leave the person alone
- Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt
- Call the US National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255)
- Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255) is a free, 24/7 service that can provide suicidal persons or those around them with support, information and resources.

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