### Austrian media guidelines for the reporting on suicide

**The probability of an imitation effect will increase**

- if the article attracts a great deal of attention (publication on title page, sensational headline (e.g. use of ‘suicide’ or ‘self-murder’, spectacular style)).
- if details on the person are given (e.g. name, photo, life circumstances, suicide note).
- if details on the suicide method are given (e.g. ‘died by...’).
- if there are details on the suicide site (mentioned or photo).
- if the article reconstructs details on the suicidal act.
- if details on suicide forums in the internet are provided (exact addresses).
- if simplifications are applied to explain suicidal behaviour (e.g. ‘...suicide because of divorce’).
- if the person or the suicidal act is described as heroic (e.g. ‘...chose a special death’).
- if suicide is romanticized (e.g. ‘...now they are forever united’).
- if interviews with relatives or friends in the shock phase following a suicide are published.

**The probability of an imitation effect will be lower**

- if individual problems are described empathetically, without giving a simplified reason for the suicidal act. Responsible use of language, style and moral judgements.
- if alternatives to suicidal behaviour are clearly stated (e.g. stories of people who chose life-adopting options instead of suicidal behaviour in crisis).
- if community resources for those who feel suicidal are listed, including updated addresses and telephone numbers.
- if public awareness of the problem of suicide is increased by
  - (i) media campaigns that are planned and carried out in collaboration with professional institutions.
  - (ii) debunking common public myths about suicide (e.g. ‘suicide attempters are those who will never commit suicide’).
  - (iii) pointing out the fact that suicidal behaviour is often closely linked to mental diseases, e.g. depressive disorders, which are treatable.
- if correct information on risk groups and warning signs preceding suicidal behaviour is published. This helps people to recognize suicidality in their own social environment.