



Creating Hope Through Action

Suicide & The Media

Background

It is widely known that media portrayals of suicide and suicide prevention impact on others. The World Health Organization recommends media initiatives and collaborations as essential and evidence-based approaches to suicide prevention. This is because sensationalist media reports about suicidal behaviours can trigger additional suicides, known as the so-called Werther effect.

Media collaborations have been established to prevent sensationalist portrayals of individual suicides including suicides by celebrities. Importantly, stories featuring individuals who have managed to cope with suicidal ideation, or who have coped with bereavement from suicide, can reduce suicidal ideation and potentially suicide, among others exposed to the stories.

Thus, these media stories of individuals who managed to cope are essential in that they can highlight ways of dealing with crisis in suicidal ideation to others affected by suicidal thoughts.

How Can I Get Involved?

Those working in the media can lead the way in responsible and supportive conversations surrounding suicide, and importantly they can also support each other through open dialogue. With many people affected by suicide, either directly or indirectly, there are numerous stories of personal coping and healing that can be shared that might help others in serious life crises and affected by suicidal ideation and suicide.

You can also help create hope through action.

be the light
#bethelight



Suicide prevention is a global challenge. Suicide ranks consistently among the top 20 causes of death globally across all age groups. One is every 100 deaths worldwide is the result of suicide. It can effect every one of us.



The global suicide rate is over twice as high among men than women.

Over half (58%) of all deaths by suicide occur before the age of 50 years old.



Written in collaboration with the IASP Suicide and The Media Special Interest Group and SAVE: Suicide Awareness Voices of Education



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Take Action

Media (including social media) portrayals of suicide prevention and how to cope are essential to spread the word about coping and recovery and create awareness of suicide prevention.

- * Consider sharing your own story of hope, healing, and recovery.
- * Send letters to local newspapers to encourage responsible media reporting of suicide.
- * Start a conversation within your community or network.

Resources

The insights and stories of people with a lived experience of suicide can be extremely powerful in helping others understand suicide better and encourage people to reach in to support someone, and for individuals to reach out for help themselves. Many such stories are shared via media, including social media. It is important that the person sharing their story knows how to do so in a way that is safe for them and for those who hear their story.

For resources on how to talk about suicide please see:

- * [WHO \(2017\) media guidelines, preventing suicides a resource for media professionals.](#)
- * [The #chatsafe guidelines for communicating safely online about suicide](#)
- * [Samaritans' media guidelines](#)
- * [Reporting on suicide](#)



Suicide occurs across all regions in the world, however, **over three quarters (77%)** of global suicides in 2019 occurred in **low- and middle-income countries.**



10 September is World Suicide Prevention Day (#WSPD). 'Creating Hope Through Action' aims to inspire confidence in all of us; that our actions may provide hope for those that are struggling.



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