

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BLOGGING ON SUICIDE

The following is meant to assist bloggers in blogging about suicide safely, maximize the effectiveness of the communications and reduce the risk of harmful effects of unsafe messaging on suicide. The information included has been shortened from its original version which can be found at www.bloggingsuicide.org.

Blog Strategy

- Set a goal for your blog post.
- Determine your audience.
- Address specific actions your audience can take (if any).
- Measure your blog post results. Did you meet your blog post goal?

1

Writing Safe Content

- Avoid using data and phrases that may overstate the problem of suicide like "suicide epidemic" or "skyrocketing."
- Do not depict or use images showing methods of suicide, self-harm and/or violence.
- Suicide is complex. Do not try to attribute a suicide death to one single reason or cause.
- Avoid words like "successful," "unsuccessful," or a "failed attempt" to describe suicide. Instead use "died by suicide," "completed," or "killed him/herself."
- Include prevention hotlines and resources, warning signs, and other prevention-focused information.
- Do not include personal details of the person who has died by suicide. Use the person's story to talk about prevention, coping, and how to seek help.

2

Monitoring Your Blog Comments

- Check comment section regularly.
- Do not ignore suicidal threats.
- Take action against rude, derogatory, or discriminatory comments.
- Avoid arguing in the comments section.
- Steer conversation back on topic when necessary.
- Choose a comment thread that works best for you and your readers.

3

Talking With the Media

Personal Story:

- Be sure your blog post is appropriate for a larger, broader audience before speaking with the media.
- Share hopeful insights gained from personal experience and how treatment can work.
- Follow the same safety guidelines found in the "Writing Safe Content" section of this document.
- Ask the journalist conducting the interview to include help resources in their article.
- Share the *Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide* (reportingsuicide.org) with the media.

General Suicide Information:

- Refer the reporter or journalist to speak with an expert.
- Avoid spreading misinformation. If you do not know the answer, be honest and say so.
- Ask to review the article before publication.

4

Personal Safety and Privacy

- Only disclose the personal details you feel comfortable letting others know about.
- Before publishing, disclose personal details privately to those it may impact negatively.
- Be sensitive to the needs of others involved in your story.
- Be respectful to those who may still be experiencing grief or trauma from a suicide event.

5

The Recommendations for Blogging on Suicide are a project of Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE) and were developed with the guidance and expertise of an international advisory panel of experts and bloggers. You can find the full version of this document and a complete list of contributors and references at www.bloggingsuicide.org.