

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

## LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

**Language matters when we are talking or writing about suicide.** Inappropriate or careless use of language can sensationalise, depersonalise or glorify a death. It can also cause distress to those bereaved by suicide. Always avoid language that criminalises suicide and consider the sensitivities of your audience.

### DO USE



**Name of the person who has died**  
(or ask those bereaved how they would like their loved one to be referred to)

**Taken his/her/their own life**

**Ended his/her/their own life**

**Died by/death by suicide**

**Suicide attempt/attempted suicide**

**Person at risk of suicide**

**A suicide**

**Coroner's conclusion**

### DON'T USE



**The body/suicide victim**

**Suicide epidemic/wave/hotspot**

**Committed suicide**

**Successful/unsuccessful/  
failed suicide attempt**

**Completed/uncompleted suicide**

**Cry for help**

**[Name] is suicidal** (don't define someone as this)

**Coroner's verdict**

### Other terms explained

**Multiple suicides:** Often used to describe a situation where more than one suicide occurs in a close time frame and geographical proximity. This does not always amount to a cluster | **Suicide cluster:** Describes a situation where more suicides occur than expected in terms of time, place or both | **Contagion:** Suicide clusters can result from 'contagion', whereby one person's suicide influences another person to engage in suicidal behaviour or increases their risk of suicidal ideation and attempts | **Suspected suicide:** Where a death is suspected to be by suicide but the cause of death has not yet been confirmed by a coroner



### Media guidance

**Suicide Reporting Toolkit**  
[suicidereportingtoolkit.com](http://suicidereportingtoolkit.com)

**Samaritans Media Reporting Guidelines**  
[samaritans.org/about-samaritans/media-guidelines](http://samaritans.org/about-samaritans/media-guidelines)

For support in dealing with the media in relation to a suicide or suspected suicide, contact the Public Health Dorset comms team:  
[phdcomms@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:phdcomms@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)



### Signposting to support

These local and national organisations can help people affected by suicide:

**Dorset Open Door:** Support for people bereaved by suicide:  
01305 361 361

**Cruse Bereavement Support:** Support for all types of bereavement: 0808 808 1677

**Samaritans 24/7 helpline:** 116 123

**Connection 24/7 NHS mental health helpline:** 0800 652 0190