



Safe Messaging Checklist for Suicide Related Stories

This checklist focuses on highlighting mindful and safe alternatives to terms or phrases to describe a suicide related story. More sensitive and powerful language can best appropriately and accurately reflect the suicide related events. Please check your developing story for language to **avoid**, along with ways to enhance using the list of **alternatives**.

Check your story 	Avoid	Alternative
	Overly detailed descriptions of a suicide method, and location.	Emphasize warning signs. Only discuss location or method if it was a public happening or very high profile.
	Romanticizing, glorifying, glamorizing, or blaming the person.	Focus on how the person lived, rather than died. Offer messages of hope and healing, such as: emphasizing the helpers, heroes or positive actions.
	Oversimplifying the cause. For example: avoid saying someone killed themselves because of a job loss.	Emphasize that suicide is complex. Focus multiple factors that help and heal. Provide information on risk factors and warning signs.
	Overstating as an epidemic, or that it is a common event.	Emphasize your story as is . Tell true numbers, rather than the magnitude of injury outside your story. Focus on help and healing messages.
	Terms like committed suicide, successful suicide, completed suicide, and failed attempt.	Replace with death by suicide, died by suicide, suicide decedent, suicide attempt survivor, or survivors of suicide loss, too their life, killed him/ her/ them self.
	Be mindful of symbols associated with death, violence, stereotypes, myths, or stigma.	Emphasize photo of yourself, a positive local group, or efforts.

Sources

- [Hawaii’s Caring Communities Initiative for Youth Suicide Prevention](#)
- [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#)