



People-First Language: Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Stigma

Mental health concerns and thoughts of suicide are very often misunderstood. The stigma that people experience can prevent them from seeking help when they need it. Using person-centered language when talking about mental health ensures that individuals are seen as a people first, not as their illnesses.

Respectful	Stigmatizing
Died by suicide/ death by suicide/ lost their life to suicide	Commit/committed suicide
Died by suicide/ survived a suicide attempt Fatal suicide attempt / non-fatal suicide attempt	Successful/ unsuccessful suicide Completed/failed suicide
Rising, increasing	Epidemic, skyrocketing
<Name> is facing suicide/ is thinking of suicide	<Name> is suicidal
He is facing suicide / thinking of suicide / experiencing suicidal thoughts They have schizophrenia / are living with schizophrenia She has bipolar disorder People with a mental illness	He's suicidal They're a schizophrenic She's bipolar The mentally ill

Reference: The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Words Matter. Retrieved on June 12, 2024, from <https://www.camh.ca/en/today-campaign/help-and-resources/words-matter>