



Medical Examiner and Coroner Guidelines



ABOUT THE GUIDELINES

Purpose
As MEs/Coroners increasingly find themselves needing to talk with the media, guidelines on doing so safely to reduce the risk of contagion is critical. Further, guidelines for talking with families who are often interviewed by media is also important in reducing the risk of contagion.

Goals
The aim of the project was to develop the first set of best practices specific to medical examiners and coroners on how to speak with the media and with families following a death by suicide.



WHO IS INVOLVED

- Medical examiners
- Coroners
- Suicide prevention experts
- Messaging experts
- Public health experts
- Media professionals

PROCESS

- 1 Conference calls, meetings, and surveys were used to collect information and data on commonly experienced practices.
- 2 A literature review was also conducted on language and safe messaging standards.
- 3 Conducted a literature review and analysis of research nationally and internationally
- 4 Using a multi-tiered approach to arrive at consensus best practices.

Best Practices For Talking With Media About Suicide

Inform Media Personnel About Suicide Contagion	Steer the Conversation from Crime to Public Health	What To Do When the Media Contacts You
Request That Media Include Resources For Their Audience	Use Reliable Data	Seek Basic Media Training
Avoid presenting suicide as common or acceptable	Explain the Complexities of Suicide	Avoid Sharing Suicide Method or Location
Use caution responding to high profile cases	Do not share the contents of a suicide note	Avoid Sharing Personal Details of the Deceased

Talking With Media About Suicide

Best Practices for Medical Examiners and Coroners Talking with Media about Suicide

Know the Media Contacts You

- Know who you are talking to. Are they a reporter, a producer, a writer, or a social media influencer?
- Know their audience. What are they looking for? What are they interested in?
- Know their style. Are they looking for a quick, easy-to-understand story or a more in-depth, investigative piece?
- Know their deadlines. Are they looking for a story that can be published quickly or one that can be published later?

Steer the Conversation from Crime to Public Health

- Avoid presenting suicide as common or acceptable.
- Explain the complexities of suicide.
- Do not share the contents of a suicide note.
- Avoid sharing personal details of the deceased.

Use Reliable Data

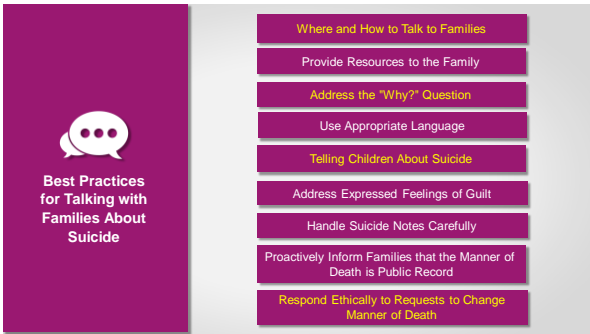
- Use data from reputable sources.
- Use data that is current and relevant.
- Use data that is easy to understand.

What To Do When the Media Contacts You

- Seek basic media training.
- Avoid sharing suicide method or location.
- Avoid sharing personal details of the deceased.

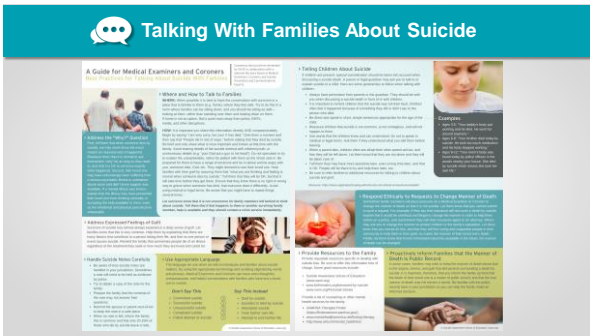
Responding to High Profile Cases

- Use caution when responding to high profile cases.
- Do not share the contents of a suicide note.
- Avoid sharing personal details of the deceased.



Best Practices for Talking with Families About Suicide

- Where and How to Talk to Families
- Provide Resources to the Family
- Address the "Why?" Question
- Use Appropriate Language
- Telling Children About Suicide
- Address Expressed Feelings of Guilt
- Handle Suicide Notes Carefully
- Proactively Inform Families that the Manner of Death is Public Record
- Respond Ethically to Requests to Change Manner of Death



Talking With Families About Suicide

A Guide for Medical Examiners and Coroners

Where and How to Talk to Families

Telling Children About Suicide

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Respond Ethically to Requests to Change Manner of Death

Proactively Inform Families that the Manner of Death is Public Record

Do you have comments or input on these Guides??

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Thank you!
