

# LANGUAGE GUIDELINES



Certain language can be problematic when discussing suicide. The language guide below provides some examples of problematic language and suggested safer alternatives. These language guidelines aim to reduce risk of harm while increasing awareness and understanding of suicide and its complexities.

## PROBLEMATIC

‘committed suicide’ or ‘commit suicide’

‘unsuccessful suicide’ or ‘failed suicide’

‘successful suicide attempt’

‘suicide victim’

## PREFERRED

‘died by suicide’ or ‘took their own life’ or ‘suicide death’

‘suicide attempt’ or ‘non-fatal suicide attempt’

‘A fatal suicide attempt’

‘Those who die by suicide’

## Avoid sharing details of suicide method and location

Research shows that public communication that includes descriptions of suicide method or location has been associated with increased rates of suicide behaviour and imitation of the suicide method/location.

## PROBLEMATIC

Detail about method or location of suicide

Images that show method or location of a suicide

## PREFERRED

No details of method or location. If needed, use general terms instead of specific details.

No photos, illustrations, diagrams or video that show suicide method or location.

Responsible reporting of suicide during COVID-19:

<https://youtu.be/gozDLnno7A>

[Reporting on Suicide During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), IASP & SAVE

If in need of support, visit the ‘Find a Helpline’ online tool on the IASP website: [https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis\\_Centres/](https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres/)

