



How to Talk About Suicide

The language you use to discuss suicide matters.



If you need immediate assistance, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Problematic

Preferred

"Committed suicide"

"Died by suicide"

The word "committed" is associated with criminal behavior or error. Changing the phrase decriminalizes the act.

"Failed suicide"

"Suicide attempt"

Words that glamorize suicide attempts, like "failed" or "unsuccessful" should be avoided.

"Successful suicide"

"Took their own life"

The word "successful" suggests that suicide is the desired outcome.

"Suicide epidemic"

"Increasing" or "concerning rates"

It's best to avoid dramatic and sensational language when describing suicide rates.

"Suffering from" or "victim of mental illness"

"Living with" or "experiencing a mental health condition"

Derogatory language can alienate or belittle those with mental health challenges.