

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

## LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

**Language matters when we are talking or writing about suicide.** Inappropriate or careless use of language can sensationalise, depersonalise or glorify a death. It can also cause distress to those bereaved by suicide. Always avoid language that criminalises suicide and consider the sensitivities of your audience.

### DO USE

A suicide

Taken his/her/their own life

Ended his/her/their own life

Died by/death by suicide

Suicide attempt/attempted suicide

Person at risk of suicide

Coroner's conclusion

Name of the person who has died  
(or ask those bereaved how they would like their loved one to be referred to)

### DON'T USE

Committed suicide

Cry for help

Successful/unsuccessful  
suicide attempt

Completed/uncompleted suicide

[Name] is suicidal (don't define  
someone as this)

Coroner's verdict

The body/suicide victim

Suicide epidemic/wave/hotspot

### OTHER TERMS EXPLAINED

**Multiple suicides:** Often used to describe a situation where more than one suicide occurs in a close time frame and geographical proximity. This does not always amount to a cluster | **Suicide cluster:** Describes a situation where more suicides occur than expected in terms of time, place or both | **Contagion:** Suicide clusters can result from 'contagion', whereby one person's suicide influences another person to engage in suicidal behaviour or increases their risk of suicidal ideation and attempts | **Suspected suicide:** Where a death is suspected to be by suicide but the cause of death has not yet been confirmed by a coroner.



**Media guidance**  
**Suicide Reporting Toolkit**  
[suicidereportingtoolkit.com](http://suicidereportingtoolkit.com)

**Samaritans Media Reporting Guidelines**  
[samaritans.org/about-samaritans/media-guidelines](http://samaritans.org/about-samaritans/media-guidelines)

For support in dealing with the media in relation to a suicide or suspected suicide, contact the Public Health Somerset team:  
[publichealth@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:publichealth@somerset.gov.uk)



**Signposting to support**  
These local and national organisations can help people affected by suicide:

**Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service:** 0300 330 5463

**Mindline Somerset, 24/7 listening and emotional support service:** local 01823 276 892, freephone 0800 138 1692

**Samaritans 24/7 helpline:** 116 123