

Responsible Suicide Reporting Model

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This is a brief guide to the Responsible Suicide Reporting Model.

1. Choose your story type:

Narrative Types

Event-driven, the first recognition by the media that a traumatic event has happened and that a newsworthy death has occurred

Post-judicial, which focusses on a court case, inquest or other legal proceedings

Tribute-driven, where the grieving family and friends pay tribute to the deceased

Anniversary, normally marking the death's first anniversary but can be later ones (for suicides tends to happen in 1, 5, 10 and 25 year blocks, eg. Kurt Cobain in April of this year)

Action-as-memorial, where the bereaved family and friends undertake a campaign, fundraising event or set up a charity in memory of their loved one.

2. Then follow the ethical rules for reporting on suicide.

4 Ethical Rules

Do not sensationalise (suicide in the headline, 'beautiful quotes' 'heaven has a new angel, RIP Babes')

Do not stigmatise describing someone as a victim of bullying, a different nationality or religion –Bridgend, all Welsh

Do not glorify focus on suicide as a life choice, or around a method, like Robin Williams and how he hanged himself

Do not gratuitously report the reason for death is overly emphasized, about dying at a particular location, Golden Gate Bridge, Beachy Head

3. Then apply and reflect on the standard of moderation.

Standard of Moderation

- Have I minimized harm to those affected by suicide?
- Have I told the truth, yet avoided explicit details of method and location?
- Have I taken care in producing the story including tone and language?
- Have I used social media responsibly?
- Do I avoid stereotypes, harmful content and stigmatising stories?
- Have I provided support via helplines?

