



Who We Are

Friends for Survival, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable, non-profit bereavement outreach organization available to those who are grieving a suicide death of family or friends. We also assist professionals who work with those who are grieving a suicide tragedy. Friends for Survival, organized by and for suicide loss survivors, has been offering support services since 1983. All staff and volunteers have been directly impacted by a suicide death.

The Urgent Need

Suicide is a Leading Cause of Death in the United States. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Reports](#), in 2020:

- Suicide was the twelfth leading cause of death overall in the United States, claiming the lives of over 45,900 people.
- Suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10-14 and 25-34, the third leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 15-24, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 44.
- There were nearly two times as many suicides (45,979) in the United States as there were homicides (24,576).
- Source: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

Our Services

The loving outreach of Friends for Survival can bridge the gap between despair and renewed hope. Those whose loss is recent can lean upon the shoulders of those who have made progress in the difficult task of working through grief after a suicide death. We provide a variety of peer support services that comfort, encourage and educate those in grief.

- Monthly meetings of grief support and education (virtual and in-person)
- Monthly newsletter of sharing and information
- Caring Friends Program
- Comprehensive list of resources and reference library
- Speakers available for workplaces and agencies impacted by a suicide death
- Education from healthcare professionals and community advocates
- Toll Free Suicide Loss Helpline: 1-800-646-7322 (warmline)

All of our services are free. We are able to offer our free services thanks to generous donors and a grant from the County of Sacramento.

Telephone: 800-646-7322
friendsforsurvival.org

What People Say

We're proud to earn Candid's (formerly GuideStar) Platinum Seal of Transparency. To reach the Platinum level, we added extensive information to our Nonprofit Profile: basic contact and organizational information; in-depth financial information; quantitative information about goals, strategies, and progress toward our mission. Visit our profile here: <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/31-1640393>

- *"I don't know what I would have done without Friends for Survival and Marilyn Koenig, its founder and leader. She is so good, caring, and fits in good humor at just the right times, along with her well trained assistants, and with all the activities they plan. I can't thank FFS enough and plan to participate and support whenever I can. My heart is still broken but without the love and camaraderie at FFS, my heart would be out-of-service. Thank you so much for all you are and all you do -- GOD BLESS YOU ALL!" – TG*
- *"I am reaching out to you to thank you for what you do to ease the pain for survivors. Your organization was a helpful resource for my family after the suicide, and we appreciate the support over these past years." - KF*
- *"Dear Friends: I have been reading your newsletter ever since we lost our loving son to suicide in 2007. Your articles are always so timely and helpful! I am so grateful for all your volunteers and personnel who keep this organization alive! What a huge gift your work and outreach is to this community. Although I have never met you in person, your love and compassion is felt through your work and efforts for all of us." -Much Love, SL*

More Facts and Stats

Visit our website for more information including:

- Our Record of Impact and financials: <https://friendsforsurvival.org/financials>
- Video of who we are and our history: <https://friendsforsurvival.org/who-we-are-%26-history>
- 2021 People Magazine Kindness Award recipient, Marilyn Koenig: <https://friendsforsurvival.org/board-%26-staff>
- Schedule of our meetings: <https://friendsforsurvival.org/meetings>
- Webinars available to watch anytime: <https://friendsforsurvival.org/webinars>



Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.

Best Practices and Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

Media Plays an Important Role in Preventing Suicide

1. Over 100 studies worldwide have found that risk of contagion is real and responsible reporting can reduce the risk of additional suicides.
2. Research indicates duration, frequency, and prominence are the most influential factors that increase risk of suicide contagion.
3. Covering suicide carefully can change perceptions, dispel myths and inform the public on the complexities of the issue.
4. Media reports can result in help-seeking when they include helpful resources and messages of hope and recovery.

Partner Organizations

These recommendations were established using a consensus model developed by SAVE. The process was led by SAVE and included leading national and international suicide prevention, public health and communication's experts, news organizations, reporters, journalism schools and internet safety experts. Collaborating organizations include:

American Association of Suicidology • American Foundation for Suicide Prevention • American Psychoanalytic Association • Annenberg Public Policy Center • Associated Press Managing Editors • Canterbury Suicide Project – University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention • Crisis Text Line • Columbia University Department of Psychiatry • ConnectSafely.org • International Association for Suicide Prevention Task Force on Media and Suicide • Medical University of Vienna • National Alliance on Mental Illness • National Institute of Mental Health • National Press Photographers Association • The Net Safety Collaborative • National Suicide Prevention Lifeline • New York State Psychiatric Institute • The Poynter Institute • Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration • Suicide Awareness Voices of Education • Suicide Prevention Resource Center • Vibrant Emotional Health

Recommendations: Following these recommendations can assist in safe reporting on suicide.

AVOID...	INSTEAD...
 Describing or depicting the method and location of the suicide.	 Report the death as a suicide; keep information about the location general.
 Sharing the content of a suicide note.	 Report that a note was found and is under review.
 Describing personal details about the person who died.	 Keep information about the person general.
 Presenting suicide as a common or acceptable response to hardship.	 Report that coping skills, support, and treatment work for most people who have thoughts about suicide.
 Oversimplifying or speculating on the reason for the suicide.	 Describe suicide warning signs and risk factors (e.g. mental illness, relationship problems) that give suicide context.
 Sensationalizing details in the headline or story.	 Report on the death using facts and language that are sensitive to a grieving family.
 Glamorizing or romanticizing suicide.	 Provide context and facts to counter perceptions that the suicide was tied to heroism, honor, or loyalty to an individual or group.
 Overstating the problem of suicide by using descriptors like “epidemic” or “skyrocketing.”	 Research the best available data and use words like “increase” or “rise.”
 Prominent placement of stories related to a suicide death in print or in a newscast.	 Place a print article inside the paper or magazine and later in a newscast.

Checklist for Responsible Reporting

- ❑ **Report suicide as a public health issue.** Including stories on hope, healing, and recovery may reduce the risk of contagion.
- ❑ **Include Resources.** Provide information on warning signs of suicide risk as well as hotline and treatment resources. At a minimum, include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Crisis Text Line (listed below) or local crisis phone numbers.
- ❑ **Use Appropriate Language.** Certain phrases and words can further stigmatize suicide, spread myths, and undermine suicide prevention objectives such as “committed suicide” or referring to suicide as “successful,” “unsuccessful” or a “failed attempt.” Instead use, “died by suicide” or “killed him/herself.”
- ❑ **Emphasize Help and Hope.** Stories of recovery through help-seeking and positive coping skills are powerful, especially when they come from people who have experienced suicide risk.
- ❑ **Ask an Expert.** Interview suicide prevention or mental health experts to validate your facts on suicide risk and mental illness.

Reporting Under Unusual Circumstances

A mass shooting where a perpetrator takes his or her life is different from an isolated suicide. Recommendations for reporting on mass shootings can be found at reportingonmassshootings.org.

A homicide-suicide is also different from an isolated suicide. The circumstances are often complex in these incidents, as they are in suicide. To minimize fear in the community, avoid speculation on motive and cite facts and statements that indicate that such events are rare. Show sensitivity to survivors in your interviews and reporting. Highlight research that shows most perpetrators of homicide-suicide have mental health or substance use problems, but remind readers that most people who experience mental illness are nonviolent.

Crisis Resources to Include in Stories



The **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** is a hotline for individuals in crisis or for those looking to help someone else. To speak with a trained listener, call **988**.



Crisis Text Line is a texting service for emotional crisis support. To speak with a trained listener, text **HELLO to 741741**. It is free, available 24/7, and confidential.

Helpful Side-Bar for Stories



Warning Signs Of Suicide

- Talking about wanting to die
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings



What to Do

- Do not leave the person alone.
- Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs, or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt
- Contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing 988
- Take the person to an emergency room, or seek help from a medical or mental health professional