

Responding to suicide and self-harm content on social media – when a person has died by suspected suicide



Content after a suspected suicide has occurred

What to do

Post messages to say that suicide is preventable.

Share information on how to access support resources, and make sure that you are posting accurate information from reliable sites.

Post messages of hope and recovery.

Block or unfollow a person or an account that you think is posting harmful material.

Consider if you should take a break from social media.

Share stories of people who have got through a difficult situation, without mentioning the suicide method or location.

Report harmful posts, videos, pictures, information or links that you come across on social media content on suicide or self-harm to that particular online platform.

Set out the 'Terms of Use' that outline the rules for posting on an online memorial page or group and encourage users to look after their own wellbeing.

What to avoid

Someone close to the person who has died finding out about the death through social media.

Writing something that you would not say directly to a family whose loved one has died by suspected suicide.

Posting suicide notes, final text messages, social media posts and emails from the person who has died.

Giving descriptions of the methods used, including how the means were obtained.

Providing detailed information about suicide in a particular location.

Using language which implies that suicide is noble or brave.

Using stigmatising language which reinforces myths, stigma or stereotypes.

Oversimplifying the cause of suicide by saying it happened for one reason.

Assigning blame to any one person or group of people.



Content relating to the suspected suicide of a celebrity or other well-known person

What to do

Focus on the celebrity's life, how they contributed to society and how their death can be used as an opportunity to raise awareness of suicide prevention.

What to avoid

Speculating that the death is by suicide when the cause is not immediately known.

Posting one message after another about the celebrity who has died.



Content relating to a suspected murder-suicide

What to do

Share information on how to access support resources for those who are, or might become, distressed or suicidal due to the deaths.

What to avoid

Avoid posting graphic details and speculating about the reasons why this has happened.



Content relating to stories of suicide in films, television programmes or books

What to do

Share information on how to access support resources for those who are, or might become, distressed or suicidal due to the deaths.

What to avoid

Using language to describe the actions of the characters which may imply that suicide is noble or brave.

Presenting suicide or self-harm in an appealing or positive manner.