

Suicide Language Guide

It is important to carefully consider the language we use around suicide, as using problematic language can perpetuate stigma and make people less likely to speak openly about how they are feeling. This guide has been put together to support professionals to feel confident when speaking about suicide. However, there will be individuals with lived experience who disagree with this and want to use terms which we have put in the 'avoid' section. You should always respect an individual's wishes, over this guide, however this guide can be useful as a baseline, especially when talking about suicidality on platforms such as social media.

Phrase to Avoid	Why	Better Alternative
Commit suicide	This phrase dates back to when suicide was illegal. It uses the language of criminality as someone commits a crime so it is stigmatizing and implies a moral judgement.	Die by suicide.
Successful/failed suicide attempt	Commenting on a suicide as an attempt as successful is jarring, as nothing can truly be a success when a life has been lost. Similarly, a 'failed' suicide attempt might create more hopelessness in someone vulnerable.	If you need to talk about the outcome of the suicide attempt, you could say 'non-fatal suicide attempt' or 'fatal suicide attempt', but 'suicide attempt' normally suffices.
Suicide victim	It makes the process of suicide seem passive and romanticises it.	Individual who has died by suicide.

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<p>Euphemisms for death e.g. 'gone to a better place' or 'passed away'.</p>	<p>These make death seem less permanent and more romantic. For some autistic people who are experiencing bullying or ostracization, saying that people who have died are now in a better place may encourage suicidality.</p>	<p>Explicitly use the words 'die' or 'take your own life'.</p>
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