



# How to develop a suicide-specific media protocol

This template for a suicide-specific media protocol strategy can be used by Primary Health Networks (PHN) to create their own protocols or make updates to current media protocols. The *Mindframe Plus* workshop includes additional advice on how to use them. We have created this template to supplement the workshop and provide some examples of things to consider when PHNs are engaging with, or being engaged by media. This advice relates to suicide-specific communication and it is recommended that suicide prevention coordinators have a conversation with their PHN communications team to see if there is an existing media protocol and, how suicide specific considerations can be incorporated.

## Key advice for internal processes:

- Ensure processes for speaking with media are clearly defined, including approvals and designated spokesperson/s
- Liaise with stakeholders about how you will coordinate responses, particularly in crisis situations
- Having good relationships with media and journalists (e.g. through previous positive engagement) can assist in safer media reporting in a postvention response.

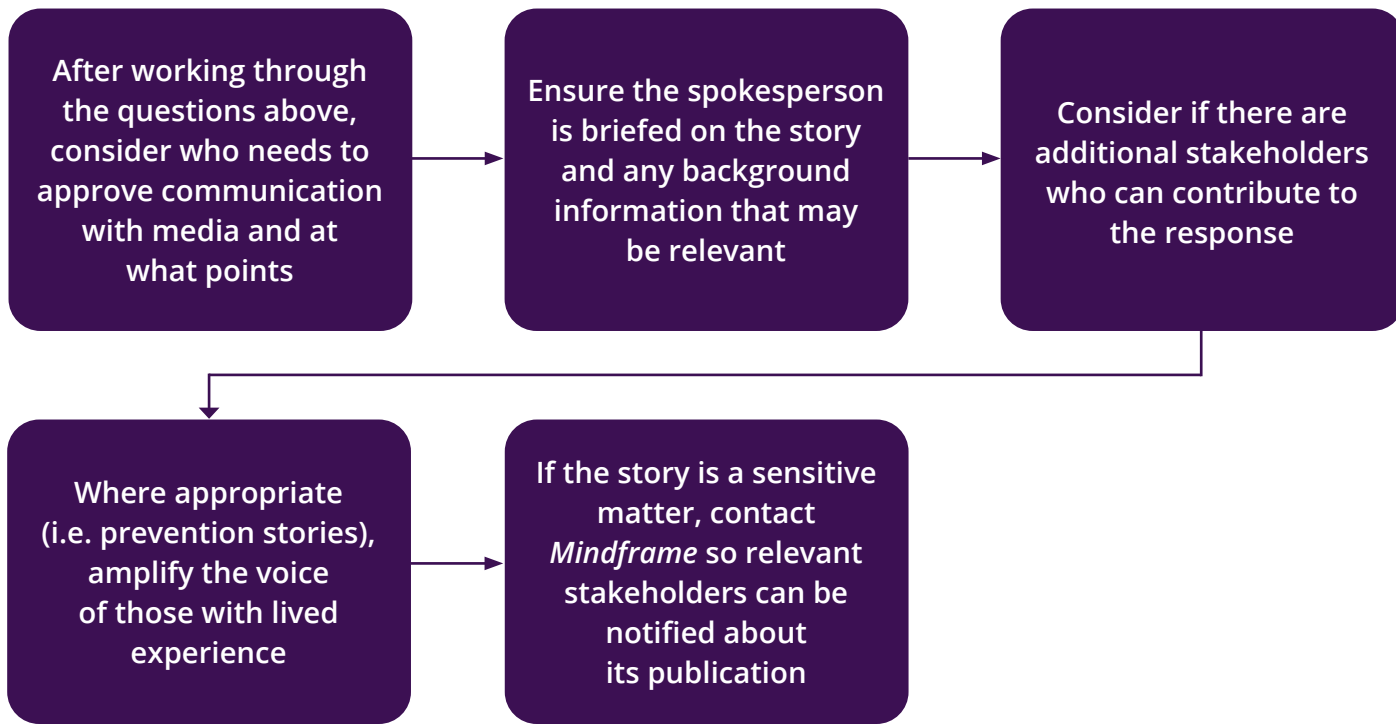
## Postvention communications strategy: Questions for PHNs and suicide prevention coordinators to consider when engaging with media

Factors to consider				Relevant context
1	Do I know the purpose of their story?	Yes	No	Suicide prevention coordinators have previously shared experiences where journalists have used alarmist language or sensationalised stories after an interview. Asking the journalist upfront about the angle of the story can help PHNs decide whether to engage with media.
2	Do I have a pre-existing relationship with the journalist or the news outlet?	Yes	No	Check with your colleagues at the PHN about whether they have worked with a journalist before. For example, have they worked collaboratively on a prevention focused piece? Or has there been a history of problematic reporting?
3	Has the journalist received <i>Mindframe</i> training or are they aware of the guidelines?	Yes	No	If the journalist has not heard of <i>Mindframe</i> we recommend passing on the guidelines and encouraging them to contact <i>Mindframe</i> for advice about safe communications.
4	Do we have key messages we want to convey in this story?	Yes	No	Thinking through the key themes will help to shape the story to include messages of support to people who may be experiencing distress in the community
5	Can the journalist provide you with a copy of the questions prior to the interview?	Yes	No	Seeing the questions prior to an interview will help to plan responses and identify any risks.
6	Is this story about an about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?	Yes	No	This may require additional considerations. Is the journalist aware of how to report safely including a disclaimer or removing images or audio of a person who has died? Are you the most appropriate person to comment on the story or is there another organisation or community member who would be best placed or should also speak with the journalist?
7		Yes	No	
8		Yes	No	
9		Yes	No	
10		Yes	No	

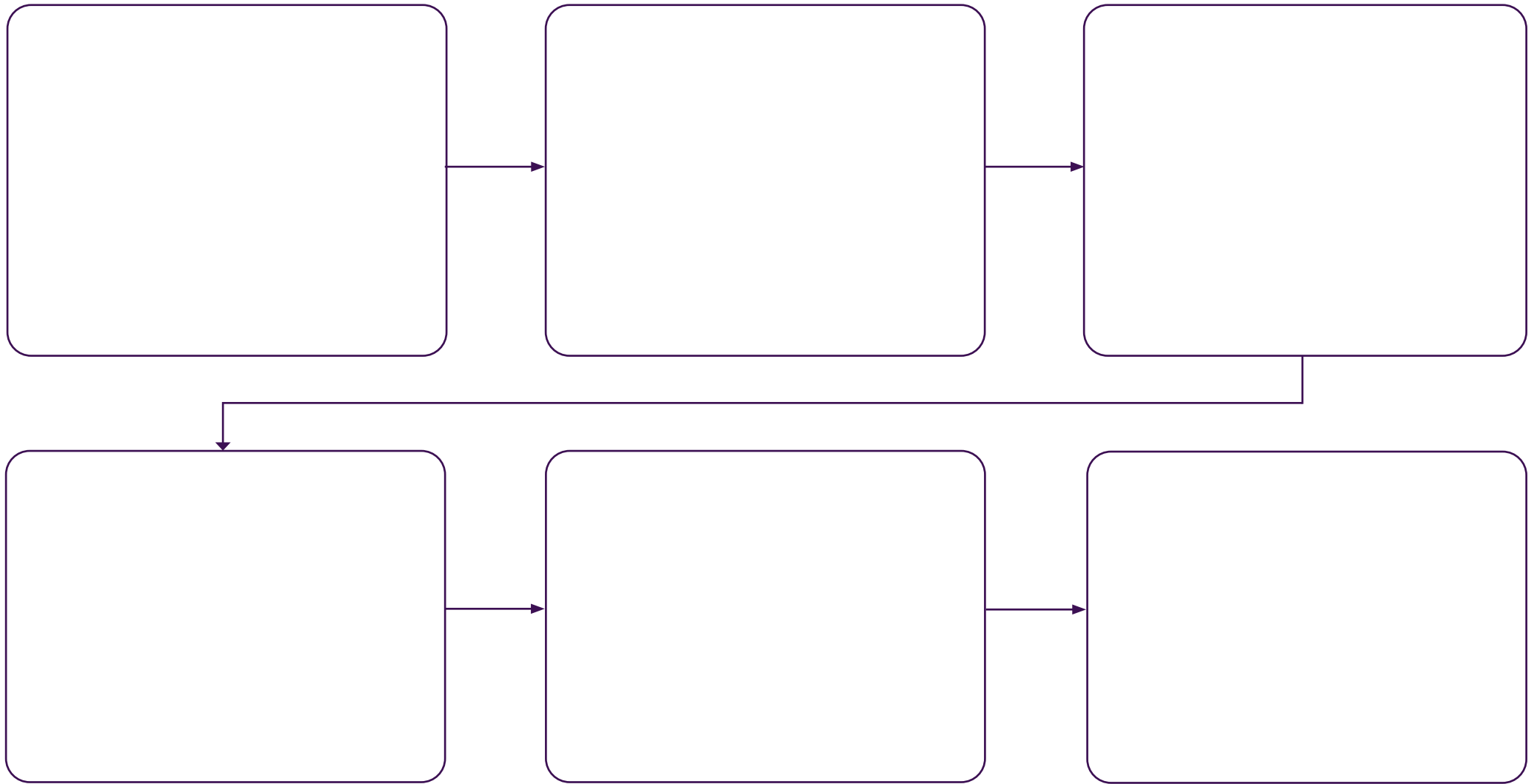
## Templates – Approval processes and key spokespeople

Below is a sample process flow chart and table to ensure staff follow approval processes and can identify key stakeholders depending on the situation and communication required. Your organisation may need more or fewer steps for approvals, or have multi-directional/parallel processes to consider.

### Example: Approval process



## Postvention communications strategy: Mapping out your approval process



## Postvention communications strategy: Designating the most appropriate spokespeople to provide public comment

Key spokespeople			
Name	Role	Contact	Notes

## Postvention communications strategy: Supporting people with lived experience to share their stories

This set of questions can be provided by PHNs to support people in their community or stakeholders to share their stories safely and decide on whether they are comfortable sharing their story and work through a number of scenarios.

Questions	Notes
What are you prepared to share about yourself and your story and what would you like to remain private?	
What topics does the journalist want to talk about and why? This helps to decide what key messages you choose.	
What are some steps you will take to ensure your story is communicated safely?	
What will you do after engaging with media, or doing an interview, to take care of yourself?	



## Additional resources

For comprehensive advice for lived experience speakers sharing their stories you can refer them to the following resources:

- [A guide for lived experience speakers: preparing for an interview or speech](#)
- [A guide for lived experience speakers: talking about suicide](#)
- [A guide for lived experience speakers: understanding the media](#)

