Social media: Quick reference guide for communicating safely about suicide

This resource, prepared in partnership with the *Mindframe* Social Media Advisory Group, builds on the *Mindframe* guidelines for reporting on suicide. It aims to assist media and communication professionals to make informed choices when moderating and managing social media.

Research shows when social media posts about a suicide death include factors such as the method or location of the suicide, there is an increased risk of individuals taking similar action. This area of concern is exacerbated due to the immediacy of social media and the difficulties in moderating various channels.

While most Australians may not be affected by exposure to suicide-related content on social media, it remains important that we support and protect all audiences. This includes those who are bereaved by suicide or have a lived and living experience of suicide.

For more detail and context, access the *Mindframe* guidelines suite including the *Our words matter: Guidelines for language use*, the *Glossary of terms* and other other supporting resources.

Always consider the impact of the social media post on the audience that will be reading or viewing it.

Key guidance:

Develop a social media policy

- Develop a bank of standard responses for moderators to adapt. This should also include guidance/protocols for screening user-generated content.

- Include a strategy to mitigate risk if a story or campaign could encourage people to disclose suicidal distress. This could include implementing 24/7 monitoring of the page and providing staff training on responding to distress.

- Become familiar with social media platforms' rules on suicide-related content.

Apply these steps when developing content related to suicide

- Assess whether the story poses risk and is in the public interest. Only rely on official sources.

- Consider the impact on communities. In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the depiction, mention or image of a person who has passed away can cause distress.

- Avoid language and images that increase stigma or glamorise suicide. Refer to the *Our words matter* and *Images Matter* guidelines to inform decisions about language and image choices.

Take action on harmful content

- Hide or remove content that depicts suicide methods or public locations where an attempt or death has occurred.

- Contact the person who posted the content and link them to a support service.

- Block, mute, or report content as appropriate.

Include appropriate help-seeking information

- Place the information in an effective location such as within a post or caption, or as a pinned comment.

- Provide contact details for at least two crisis support lines that are available 24/7 and are appropriate for the demographic.

- Contact details for help-seeking services, including population-specific reference cards, are available via the *Mindframe website*.

Practice and encourage self-care for media and social media moderators

- Have a support plan in place for staff that are regularly dealing with suicide-related content.

- Consider alerting a manager, talking with someone you trust, or contacting a support service such as an employee assistance program (EAP) if you or anyone else is affected by the content.

For more detail and context, visit the Guidance for social media page on the *Mindframe* website.