How to Talk About Suicide

The language you use to discuss suicide matters.

If you need immediate assistance, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Problematic	Preferred
"Committed suicide"	**"Died by suicide"**
The word "committed" is associated with criminal behavior or error. Changing the phrase decriminalizes the act.	
"Failed suicide"	**"Suicide attempt"**
Words that glamorize suicide attempts, like "failed" or "unsuccessful" should be avoided.	
"Successful suicide"	**"Took their own life"**
The word "successful" suggests that suicide is the desired outcome.	
"Suicide epidemic"	**"Increasing" or "concerning rates"**
It's best to avoid dramatic and sensational language when describing suicide rates.	
"Suffering from" or "victim of mental illness"	**"Living with" or "experiencing a mental health condition"**
Derogatory language can alienate or belittle those with mental health challenges.	