

# Sample Media Statement

It may be necessary to proactively or upon request provide a statement to local media outlets. Such statements will likely need to be reviewed by the organization’s communication and legal team. In some states there may be a state law regarding discussing cause of death. A sample script is below:

We were informed by the coroner’s office that [Name] has died. The cause of death was suicide.

OR

We were informed by the coroner’s office that [Name] has died unexpectedly.

[Name] was a [position/title] at [Organization Name].

Our thoughts and support go out to [Name]’s family and friends at this difficult time.

Trained crisis counselors will be available to meet with colleagues, employees and staff starting tomorrow and continuing over the next few weeks as needed.

Research has shown that graphic, sensationalized, or romanticized descriptions of suicide deaths in the news media can increase the risk of suicide contagion (“copycat” suicides). Media coverage that details the location and manner of suicide with photos or video increases risk of contagion.

Media should avoid oversimplifying the cause of suicide; this gives people a simplistic understanding of a very complicated issue, and doesn’t allow for learning about the many risk factors that can be points for intervention.

Media should include links to or information about helpful resources such as local mental health resources, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and the Crisis Text Line at 741-741.

Media are strongly encouraged to refer to the document “Reporting on Suicide: Recommendations for the Media,” which is available at [afsp.org/media](https://afsp.org/media).

**For further questions, please contact [Name of organization’s media contact].**

*Reprinted with permission from [After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Physician Residency/Fellowship Programs](#) developed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Mayo Clinic.*

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