

Mindframe media alert

**World Suicide Prevention Day and R U OK? Day
Advice for media professionals**

7 September 2015
please cascade to all media staff

In the lead up to **World Suicide Prevention Day** and the national suicide prevention campaign **R U OK? Day** this **Thursday 10th September**, it is a timely reminder for media professionals covering these events of the *Mindframe* resources, which provide evidenced-based support and practical advice for journalists reporting suicide and mental illness.

Media play a powerful role in raising awareness of suicide and suicide prevention, but media stories about suicide also have the potential to do harm. Media codes of practice reinforce the need to proceed with caution when considering reports about suicide attempts and deaths, but do not discourage stories that are legitimately in the public interest or explore the broader issue of suicide.

Research also shows that media reporting of suicide in Australia is extensive.

HELPFUL WAYS TO PRESENT INFORMATION

Suicide is an important issue of community concern. While there is limited research evidence to support positive outcomes related to media reporting of suicide, it is generally agreed that:

- **Media play an important role in reporting about the broader issue of suicide, which includes analysis of policy, practice, research, rates and trends, and other areas of public interest**
- **Covering suicide sensitively and accurately can challenge public misconceptions and myths, increase community awareness and encourage discussion and prevention activities**
- **It is helpful when the community is informed about the risk factors of suicide, including warning signs, the importance of taking suicidal thoughts seriously and providing information about where people can get support**
- **Coverage that focuses on personal stories about overcoming suicidal thinking can promote hope and may encourage others to seek help**
- **Reporting that focuses on suicide as a health and community issue helps to increase community awareness and decrease stigma**
- **Reports that show the impact that suicide has on individuals and communities can increase understanding about the experiences of those affected by suicide.**

A guide to safe reporting, and supporting resources can be found [here](#).

Help-seeking Information

Adding help-seeking information to stories (online, print and broadcast) can provide somewhere for people who may be adversely impacted by the coverage to find professional support. People are more likely to seek help and advice when appropriate services are included in stories. We recommend adding the following services to any story about suicide:

National 24/7 Crisis Services

- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467
www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- **MensLine Australia:** 1300 78 99 78
www.mensline.org.au
- **beyondblue:** 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800
www.kidshelp.com.au

Self-care for journalists

Reporting mental illness and suicide can also have an impact on the welfare of journalists. To support media professionals *Mindframe*, in consultation with the [DART Centre Asia Pacific](#), developed journalism self-care resources for media professionals reporting suicide and mental illness. These resources include self-care tips for journalists as well as advice for editors and line managers. Resources can be found [here](#).

The *Mindframe* National Media Initiative can provide media comment or expert advice on media reporting of suicide and/or mental illness. Our spokespeople include:

- Jaelea Skehan, Director Hunter Institute of Mental Health
- Marc Bryant, Program Manager *Mindframe* National Media Initiative

For further information or advice, please visit the [Mindframe website](#) or contact:

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