

LET'S KEEP TALKING



Lancashire and
South Cumbria
Integrated Care Board

Words matter... Suicide prevention

Why? Research shows:




















- The words we choose matter.....Language is powerful!
- Talking about suicide can help protect someone
- Non-stigmatising, compassionate language is important

Alongside the language, remember:

- Don't avoid conversations through worry you'll say the wrong thing
- Show you are listening
- Find a quiet place without disturbances
- Try not to cut the conversation short
- It's ok to slip up from time to time

You can find out more information at:

www.lancashireandsouthcumbria.icb.nhs.uk/suicideprevention

 Say	Died by suicide, lost their life to suicide, took their own life.	 Say	Died by suicide, fatal suicide attempt.
 Avoid	Commit/committed suicide.	 Avoid	Successful or completed suicide.
 Outcome	The word 'commit' could imply suicide is a sin or crime.	 Outcome	It can frame a very tragic outcome as an achievement or something positive.
 Say	Suicide attempt, survived a suicide attempt.	 Say	...is thinking of suicide, ...is feeling suicidal, ...is experiencing suicidal thoughts or feelings.
 Avoid	Failed or unsuccessful suicide attempt.	 Avoid	...is suicidal.
 Outcome	Failed or unsuccessful can imply the opposite would be a positive outcome.	 Outcome	Helps to avoid defining someone by their experience with suicide.
 Avoid	...is feeling suicidal because of/ took their own life because...	 Avoid	Cry for help.
 Outcome	The reasons for someone thinking of or taking their own life are complex so it is important not to speculate.	 Outcome	Suicide attempts must be taken seriously. Describing an attempt as 'cry for help' dismisses the intense emotional distress someone is experiencing.
 Say	Are you having thoughts of suicide?/are you feeling suicidal?/have you been thinking about killing yourself?		
 Avoid	You're not going to do anything silly are you?/Are you thinking of ending it all?/You're not going to top yourself are you?		
 Outcome	This is to show that you are prepared to talk about suicidal thoughts and feelings and take it seriously. It's important to be direct. Using the word suicide shows people you are ok with them talking about it too and that you are there to listen.		

Resources:

www.shiningalightonsuicide.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Language-guide-for-talking-about-suicide.pdf
www.researchgate.net/publication/333390095_Language_Use_and_Suicide_An_Online_Cross-Sectional_Survey
www.researchgate.net/publication/237011391_Suicide_and_Language_Why_we_shouldn't_use_the_'C'_word
www.psycnet.apa.org/record/2021-22428-001
www.media.samaritans.org/documents/Samaritans_Media_Guidelines_UK_Apr17_Final_web.pdf

