

Recommendations National Advisory Group to Welsh Government on Suicide and Self-harm Prevention

Chair- Dr Ann John

1. To remove the word 'excessive' in relation to the level of detail on suicide methods reported. When detailed descriptions of suicide methods are included in reports cognitive awareness of specific suicide methods increase and so can contribute to increases in their use.
2. To add that specific methods should not be mentioned where novel and/or unusual and/or highly lethal suicide methods are used. This should include the reporting of inquests. There is strong evidence demonstrating how new methods have caught on in some countries following detailed newspaper reporting.
3. To add that care should be taken to avoid generating sensational or prominent coverage. This includes stating the suicide method in the headline, speculation on causes and photographs of known suicide locations. Particular care should be applied in cases involving young people, who are at increased risk of contagion and celebrities, where the risk of contagion through over-identification is greater. Over simplification should be avoided, suicide is a complex issue and there is rarely a single cause for any individual. Where only one cause is reported there is again a risk of over-identification.
4. Sources of support should always be included when covering the topic of suicide, and self-harm, such as Samaritans' 24hr helpline.