



## The Framework for Successful Messaging in Action

### Introducing...The Messenger!

**The Messenger** is a *new* resource from the [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) (Action Alliance). This e-newsletter is designed to highlight our comprehensive [Framework for Successful Messaging](#), and to share stories from the field of messaging in action.

**What's the Framework?** While resources have long existed to help [news reporters develop safer coverage](#) about suicide, there's been little guidance available for others communicating publicly about suicide. The Action Alliance's *Framework* fills that gap, and provides guidance and resources for messages disseminated to the public by suicide prevention messengers – like **YOU!**

The *Framework* is a tool you can use to ensure the messages you craft and disseminate to the public (such as educational materials, social media, newsletters, website content, etc.) are [strategic](#), [safe](#), contribute to a [positive narrative](#), and follow [applicable guidelines](#).

The *Framework* is part of the Action Alliance's effort to change the public conversation about suicide and suicide prevention – and to help **reduce the annual suicide rate 20 percent by 2025**. To achieve this, our messaging must be aligned, consistent and sustained. That's why, Action Alliance will be regularly sending you The Messenger.

**All messages should consider 4 key elements.**

The most successful messaging will be shaped by the following four elements: **strategy**,

## STRATEGY

The most successful messages are focused and intentional. Understanding the audience and tailoring messages to their context is key to successful messaging. Ask yourself:

- Why we are messaging?
- How does the messaging fit into the overall mission and connect to the other suicide prevention efforts?
- Who is the audience for the message?
- What channels will best reach the audience?
- What do we want the audience to do in response to message?
- How can we frame the message to achieve this result?

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## SAFETY

It's critical to avoid content that is unsafe or counterproductive. Certain types of messages about suicide can increase the likelihood that at-risk individuals will consider or attempt suicide themselves. Increased risk is associated with:

- Repeated, prominent, or sensational coverage
- Details about suicide method or location
- Portraying suicide as a common or acceptable response to adversity
- Glamorizing or romanticizing suicide
- Including personal details that encourage identification with the person who died

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## POSITIVE NARRATIVE

Successful messages promote the positive, for example, by including action steps, how to access resources, suicide prevention successes, stories of hope and recovery, or other solution-oriented content. For example, you might include:

- Concrete and realistic actions that a particular audience can take to contribute to suicide prevention, along with information needed to act (e.g. guidance, warning signs, phone numbers)
- Examples of effective prevention or intervention efforts
- Personal stories of coping, resilience, and recovery
- Descriptions of effective treatments and where to find them
- Programs or services your organization provides
- Stories of people helped by particular services or supports
- Descriptions of program accomplishments and successes

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## GUIDELINES

In addition to creating suicide prevention messages that are strategic, safe, and contribute to a Positive Narrative about suicide prevention, it is important to follow specific guidelines or recommendations that apply to your particular messages.

Check the guidelines of the *Framework* to see if there are guidelines relevant to your topics, channels, populations, and other message features. For example:

- If your plan includes using a **video**, you can consult the "[AAS Criteria for Educational Videos on Youth Suicide](#)."
- If you are a suicide loss or attempt survivor planning to tell your story to the public, you can refer to "[Special considerations for telling your own story: Best practices for presentations by suicide loss and suicide attempt survivors](#)."

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## Spotlight On: Successful Messaging

Have an example that illustrates the *Framework for Successful Messaging*?

[Email Us!](#)

[Sign on today](#) to indicate your commitment to using the *Framework*.

### ***Framework Resources***

- What is the *Framework*, who is it for, and what is 'public messaging'?
- How does the *Framework* 'Change the Conversation'?
- Summary of the background research that lead to the *Framework*
- Examples that illustrate the four *Framework* elements

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National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention



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