The Messenger

Because Messaging Matters!

SuicidePreventionMessaging.org

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 are we messaging?
- How does the messaging fit into the overall mission and connect to 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 the message?
- How can we frame the message to achieve this result?

### 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

### 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

### 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."

### Read More

[Read More](#)
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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