



Different approaches to engaging journalists in suicide preventive reporting



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Involvement of journalists in the development and updates of media guidelines



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The process of guidelines for suicide reporting (Finland)

- ▶ First contact with Council for Mass Media in Finland (beginning of the 2020).
- ▶ The next meetings: Council for Mass Media in Finland, Association of Editors, The Finnish Association of Magazine Editors-in-Chief, Association of Editors-in-Chief of Local Newspapers, Association of Editors-in-Chief of Urban Newspapers in Finland, and The Union of Journalists in Finland.
 - Facts from scientific studies, copy-cat phenomenon, practical problems with reporting, views from the field and research.
- ▶ **Media professionals decided to act on developing guidelines → Guidelines will be developed by journalists themselves, not by "some authority".**
- ▶ Release on Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, 2020. Seminar on suicide in media discussed about the possibilities of media in suicide prevention, and responsible reporting of suicide.

Involvement of journalists in the development and updates of media guidelines (Slovenia)

Leading the development of
the
guidelines in the country

2010
joint effort of 4 institutions active in the field of sui prevention in SLO: NIJZ, SASP, IAM, OZARA

Translation of original, existing WHO/IASP media guidelines

Involvement of journalists
in the development of
guidelines

- 'Nothing about us without us'*
- Involvement of Journalist's honorary tribunal (advocacy of guidelines)
 - Involvement of journalists and editors
 - - Critical review of the translation
 - - Suggestions for improvements, appendixes (e.g. ethical rule, help numbers, vignettes, etc)
 - Guidelines dissemination; workshops with journalists on site

Involvement of journalists in the development and updates of media guidelines (Slovenia)

positive and negative
effects of the approach

POSITIVE

- Change of journalist ethical codex
(paragraph on suicide reporting added)
- Change in suicide reporting

NEGATIVE

- Increase of inappropriate photo material



DE GRUYTER
Open Access

10.1515/niph-2017-0005

Zdrav Var 2017; 56(1)

Roškar S, Tančič Grum A, Poštuvan V, Podlesek A, De Leo D. The adaptation and implementation of guidelines for responsible media reporting on suicide in Slovenia. Zdrav Var 2017; 56(1): 1-8

THE ADAPTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE MEDIA REPORTING ON SUICIDE IN SLOVENIA

PRIREDBA IN IMPLEMENTACIJA STROKOVNIH SMERNIC ZA ODGOVORNO NOVINARSKO POROČANJE O SAMOMORU V SLOVENIJI

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:
suicide, prevention,
media guidelines

Introduction. The existing literature provides evidence of the link between media reporting and suicide in terms of either preventive or provocative effects. Hence, working with media representatives on responsible reporting on suicide is of great importance. Until recently in Slovenia, there has been an obvious lack of communication between media representatives and suicidologists. The aims of the present study were twofold: firstly, to introduce the adaptation and dissemination of intervention on responsible media reporting, and secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented intervention on suicide reporting.



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Getting involved in the education of journalists



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Education of journalists

ESTONIA



Dr.sc. Zrinka Laido, MD

Mental Health Department
Ministry of Social Affairs



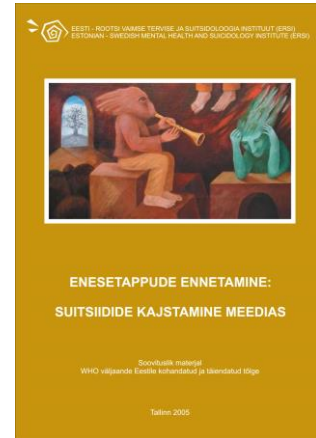
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Previous steps

- ▶ Translated WHO´s „Preventing suicide: A resources for media professionals“ (ERSI, 2005)
- ▶ Media recommendations for journalists
Soovitused ajakirjanikele - Peaasi.ee



Trainings for suicide preventive reporting in the education of journalists

- Online course for the students studying journalism at Tallinn University (<https://classroom.google.com/c/MzA5NzE5OTc5NzQ4>)
- Currently not available as elective course on other universities
- Beta version – still in developmental phase, used occasionally
- Available in Estonian and English language
- 17 sections: learning goals, practical exercises, reading assignments, case studies, self-reflection, mind map, myths and facts
- 2 main courses: Individual course/or to practice with fellow student



- Home
- Calendar
- Enrolled
- To-do
- Individual. Preventing suicide...**
- Preventing suicide for media ...
- Archived classes
- Settings

Stream Classwork People



Upcoming

Woohoo, no work due soon!

[View all](#)

Announce something to your class

This is where you'll see updates for this class

Use the stream to connect with your class and check for announcements

- Home
- Calendar
- Enrolled
- To-do**
- Individual. Preventing suicide...
- Preventing suicide for media ...
- Archived classes
- Settings

Assigned Missing Done

No due date

17 ^

- Start a learning journal**
Individual. Preventing suicide for media professionals
Posted Saturday, Apr 10, 2021
- A conversation with Dr Dan Reidenberg**
Individual. Preventing suicide for media professionals
Posted Saturday, Apr 10, 2021
- Autobiographical lens**
Individual. Preventing suicide for media professionals
Posted Saturday, Apr 10, 2021
- It's time to set some goals!**
Individual. Preventing suicide for media professionals
Posted Saturday, Apr 10, 2021
- Introductory assignment**
Individual. Preventing suicide for media professionals
Posted Saturday, Apr 10, 2021



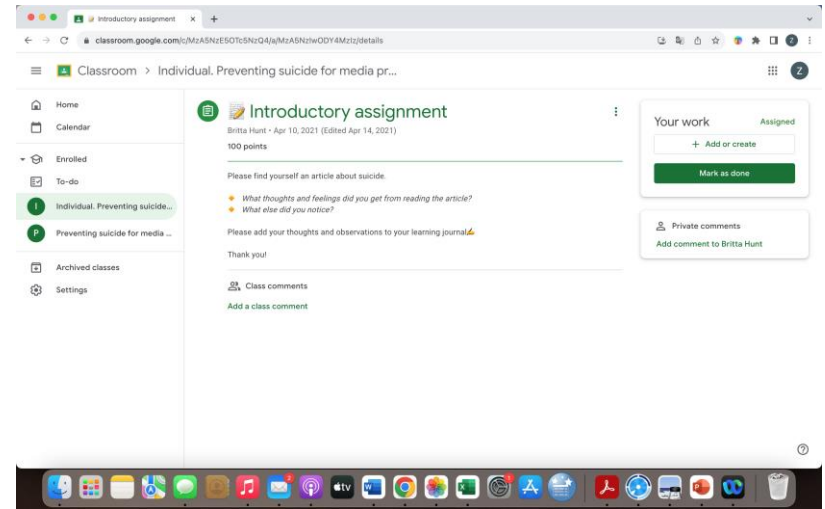
SECTIONS

- ▷ **Start a learning journal-** create a reading journal (Google Forms, Google Docs)
- ▷ **A conversation with Dr. Dan Reidenberg (Video)**
- ▷ **Autobiographical lens** - connections with topic of suicide previously, information on ethical and good way to report on suicides in the media
- ▷ **It´s time to set some goals** - setting personal learning goal (s) for this course



Introductory assignment - finding an article about suicide

- ▶ Reflect on thoughts and feelings from reading the article
- ▶ To add own thoughts and observations to learning journal
- ▶ For every assignment it is possible to add work, mark as done, and provide comment



Reading assignment 1

- ▶ Research shows that writing about suicide impacts on suicide rates
- ▶ Two well-known examples describing the effect of media reports provided: Werther effect (copycat suicides), Papageno effect (positive coping)
- ▶ YouTube links provided
- ▶ Scientific evidence of media impacts

Read through the materials (Scientific evidence of media impacts.pdf). Once read, take 7-10 minutes to think about your findings and make an overview and phrase a couple of learning points for your future or current career as a media professional into your learning diary.

Source:
Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals, update 2017. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017 (WHO/MSD/MER/17.5).

What are the aspects of reporting that have been associated with an increase in suicides?

And which aspects have been associated with preventing suicide?

Risk of imitating behaviours (copycat suicides)

The impact of reporting on suicide

Suicide and its prevention (positive coping)

Digital media

Celebrity suicide

Individually, think of the questions below and write your thoughts down in your learning journal:

- 1) As a media professional, how did it make you think and feel?
- 2) What are the ethical points to remember?
- 3) Any ideas you would like to take along for your journalist's toolkit for the future?

(Derived from Gibbs, 1988)



Reading assignment 2

- Deeper insight, reading files and the assignments

Read through the materials (available in Reading Assignment. Extra). Once read, take 7-10 minutes to think about your findings and make an overview and phrase a couple of learning points for your future or current career as a media professional into your learning diary.

Part A
Phillips DP. The influence of suggestion on suicide: substantive and theoretical implications of the Werther effect. Am Sociol Rev. 1974;39(3):340-54

Part B
Sonneck G, Etzersdorfer E, Nagel Kuess S. Imitative suicide on the Viennese subway. Soc Sci Med. 1994;38(3):453-7

Part C
Niederkroenthaler, T., Voracek, M., Herberth, A., Till, B., Strauss, M., Etzersdorfer, E., . . . Sonneck, G. (2010). Role of media reports in completed and prevented suicide: Werther v. Papageno effects. British Journal of Psychiatry, 197(3), 234-24

Handwritten notes in speech bubbles:
- "What are the aspects of reporting that have been associated with an increase of suicides?"
- "And which aspects have been associated with preventing suicide?"



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A future professional lens

- ▷ Reflect on what is learned
 - ▷ Looking at the learning goals set in the beginning and evaluate
 - ▷ Possible to use action plan attached
 - ▷ Thinking as a professional of reporting suicides and respond
-
- ✓ *What aspects am I considering when I face writing about a suicide in the future?*
 - ✓ *What are the ethical principles I base my work on? What aspects are important for me when covering a suicide?*



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Take another look at the article you look

ning of the course. What kind of

- Home
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- Preventing suicide for media ...
- Archived classes
- Settings

Action Plan

	Targets	Next steps	Success criteria
What ethical aspects am I considering when I face writing about a suicide in the future?			
What are the ethical principles I base my work on? What aspects are important for me when covering a suicide?			

Your work Assigned

+ Add or create

Mark as done

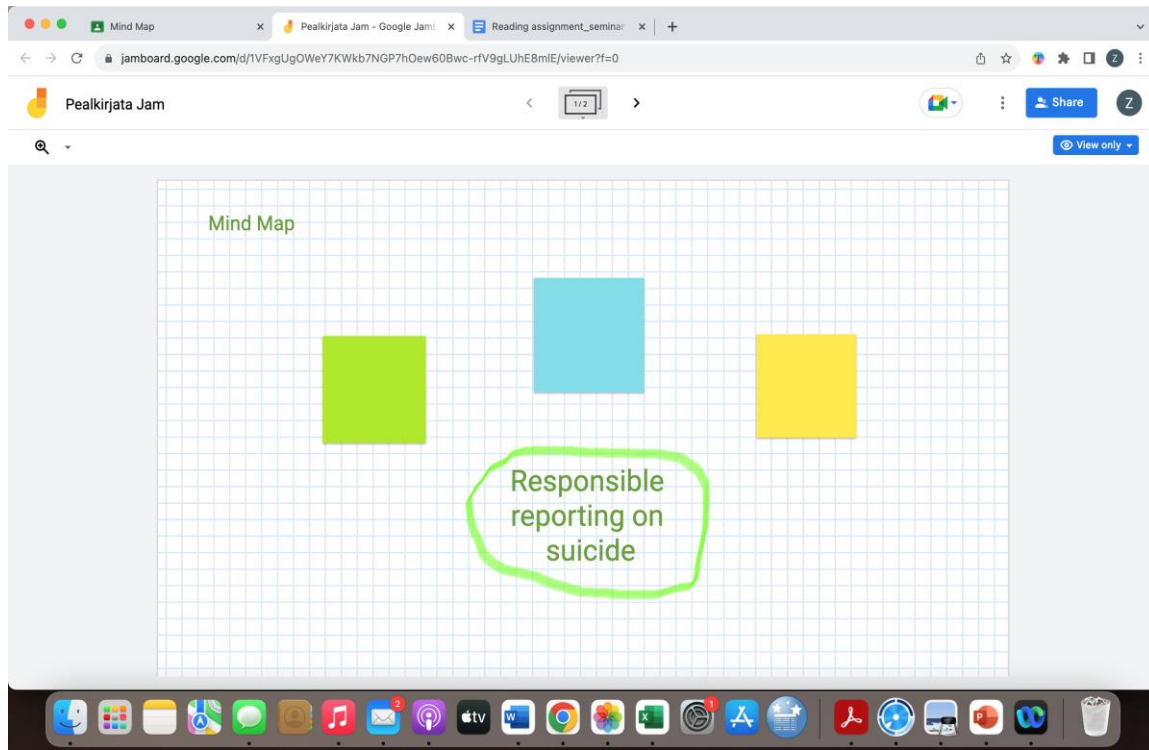
Private comments

Add comment to Andrea Annus



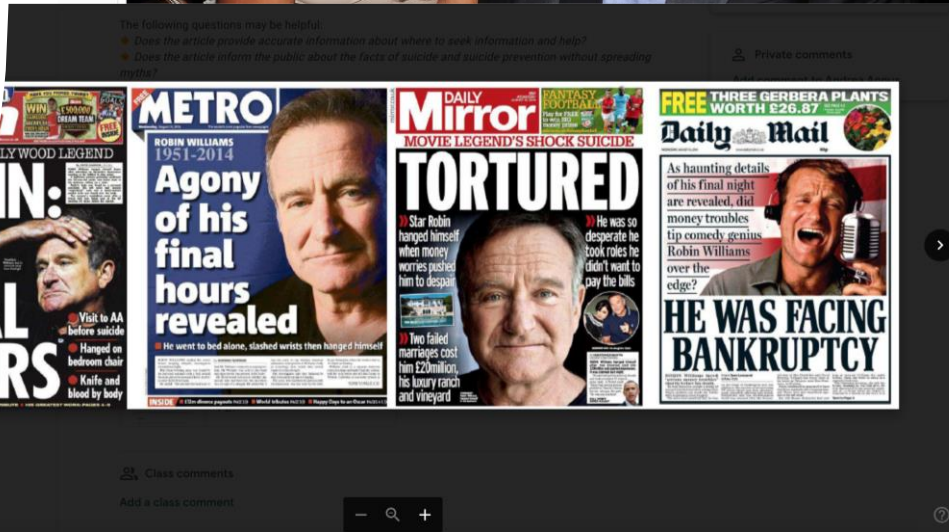
▶ **It's time to move a bit** – sound mind in a sound body. Take a break and do couple of yoga poses – or planks!

▶ **Mind Map** – the most important thought regarding responsible reporting on suicide. Making up own mind map



Case study 1

- ▶ Analysing articles published on Robin Williams death
- ▶ The principles of responsible and ethical reporting need to be considered



docs.google.com/document/d/119LHpZhafrdnFwvCnMQ7H05rmuHsDgn9NIRwvMoj/edit

Quick reference guide

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Extensions Zotero Help

Normal text Arial 7 B I U A

Don'ts

- Don't place stories about suicide prominently and don't **unduly repeat** such stories
- Don't use **language** which sensationalizes or normalizes suicide, or presents it as a constructive solution to problems
 - Don't explicitly describe the method used
 - Don't provide details **about** the site/location
 - Don't use sensational headlines
 - **Don't** use photographs, video footage or social media links

vi

docs.google.com/document/d/119LHpZhafrdnFwvCnMQ7H05rmuHsDgn9NIRwvMoj/edit

Quick reference guide

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Extensions Zotero Help

Normal text Arial 7 B I U A

Preventing suicide: a resource for media professionals, update 2017. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2017 (WHO/SMS/EMER/17.5)

Responsible reporting on suicide: quick reference guide

Dos

- Do provide accurate information about where to seek help
- Do educate the public about the facts of suicide and suicide prevention, **without spreading myths**
- Do report stories of how to cope with life stressors or suicidal thoughts, **and how to get help**
 - Do apply particular caution when reporting celebrity suicides
 - Do apply caution when interviewing bereaved family or friends
- Do recognize that media professionals themselves may be affected by stories about suicide



Tools for analysing

1. Does the article provide accurate information about where to seek information and help?
2. Does the article inform the public about the facts of the suicide and suicide prevention without spreading myths?
3. Does the article include information on how to cope with life stressor or suicidal thoughts and how to get information and help?
4. Has the suicide been reported discreetly (with caution)?
5. Is the language of the article appropriate?



6. Does the article include a description of the method and the location of the suicide?
7. Do you think the headline of the article and used photos are appropriate?
8. What were some critical turning points in Robin Williams' life?
9. Looking at the examples attached, how did the media report on his suicide? Was it responsible and ethical reporting?
10. From his family's perspective, how do you think it may have affected his family?
11. Has the article been amended, and if yes, then why?



Practice – Write a story and share your thoughts

- ▷ Finding online story reporting on suicide that is not entirely in line with responsible reporting principles. The students needs to rewrite it according to the recommendations
- ▷ Possibilities to check examples of 2020 National Media Award and more articles

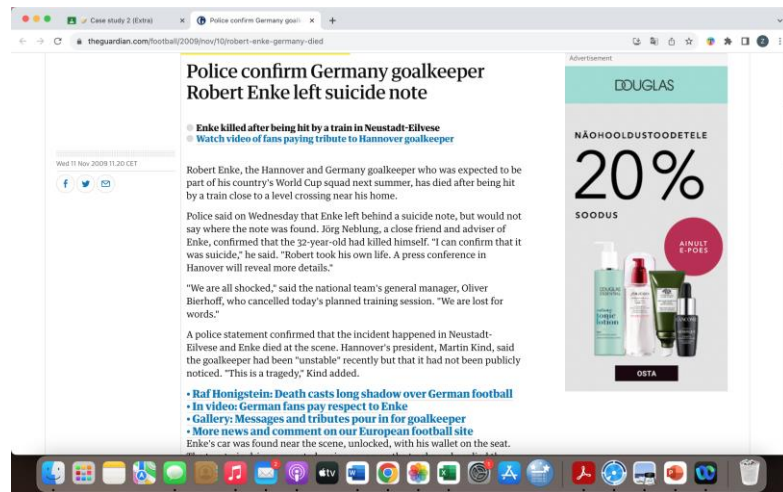
Readers and loved ones´ lens- answer following

- ▷ Through the eyes of the student as a news reader (how did reading articles affect, what assumptions have been made)
- ▷ Through the eyes of student as a relative or a friend
- ▷ What to consider, communicate/write when communicating with the relatives, of a person who died by suicide



Case study 2

- ▶ Article about Rober Enke
- ▶ First thoughts about what happened to Robert Enke
- ▶ Other ways to understand and interpret the situation
- ▶ Writing about a similar situation



How are you taking care of your mental health

- ▷ Includes self-care or self-regulatory practices or strategies in place
- ▷ Write them into learning journal

Exercise 2: Notice own feelings and coping tools

- ▷ Notice feelings and establish, what kind of resources help to cope



Myths and Facts quiz about suicide – yes/no

The image shows a browser window displaying a Google Forms quiz. The browser's address bar shows the URL: docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfil9Zzfz6sv10m3XgnJdrVHmBvbG2XFMrO-3JBctDaRmHfg/viewform?hr_submission=Chk4uPo3Z4CEhAlia7_5YE... The page title is 'Myths and Facts'. The quiz content is as follows:

Myths and facts about suicide

You do not really want to spread any myths about suicide, do you? Why not put your knowledge to a test and receive immediate feedback after submitting the results!

Please read the following statements and decide whether it is a myth or a fact (choose the appropriate answer).

zrinka.laido@yahoo.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

Question 1: Suicidal behaviour is easy to explain. 1 point

Myth

Fact

Question 2: Someone who is suicidal is determined to die. 1 point

Myth

Fact

Question 3: Talking about suicide is a bad idea and can be interpreted as encouragement. 1 point

The bottom of the image shows a macOS dock with various application icons including Safari, Photos, Notes, Maps, Messages, App Store, Music, Mail, Podcasts, Apple TV, Word, Chrome, Photos, Excel, System Preferences, App Store, Safari, Adobe Acrobat, and a trash can.

Austria 1

Are there any trainings for suicide preventive reporting in the education of journalists in your countries?

yes, randomly distributed over the country and the institutions.

Mostly in „Fachhochschulen“

Part of SUPRA-program but more or less side effect of Papageno Media Prize



Austria 2

Who delivers the trainings? What tools are used for this?

Since 1980ies SP experts and to some extend Press Council

Since Papageno: Papageno Winners, Press Council, SP experts

Mainly trainings for journalist who already on the job



Austria

What ideas do you have on reaching persons working in media companies that were not trained as journalists? Are there any trainings for them in your country?

Papageno Media Prize as vehicle for awareness of journalists for guidelines.

Trainings by SP experts together with Papageno Winners (e.g. in Salzburg)



Screening media content for problematic content



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Checklist for reporting on suicide (Finland)

- Consider carefully, whether the report is necessary, and if it is, what you need to report on suicide.
- Consider, how to report, when the person in question is a celebrity.
- Take the feelings of bereaved ones into account.
- Avoid publishing the method or the place.
- Do not use sensation speaking photos.
- Do not normalize or dramatize suicide.
- Matter-of-fact reporting prevents rumours and false assumptions.
- Include information where to get help when needed.

Muistilista itsemurhasta uutisointiin

- 1** Harkitse tarkoin, onko itsemurhasta uutisointi tarpeen ja mitä siitä tarvitsee kertoa. Julkisuutta saaneet itsemurhat aiheuttavat jäljittelyriskin. Tämä koskee yhtä lailla sekä kotimaan että ulkomaan uutisia.
- 2** Käytä harkintaa myös julkisuuden henkilön itsemurhan uutisoinnissa. Erityistä hienovaraisuutta tarvitaan, koska jäljittelyn riski on suuri.
- 3** Ota suremaan jääneiden tunteet huomioon.
- 4** Vältä itsemurhan tekotavan tai tarkan tekopaikan mainitsemista, jos niiden kertomiseen ei ole erityistä perustetta.
- 5** Älä käytä sensaatiohakuksia kuvia (itsemurhamenetelmästä/paikasta/uhrista).
- 6** Älä normalisoi tai dramatisoi itsemurhaa.
- 7** Itsemurha ei kuitenkaan ole tabu. Siitä asiallisesti kertominen torjuu huhuja ja vääriä oletuksia.
- 8** Jos uutisen yhteyteen luontevasti sopii, [kannattaa kertoa tukipalveluista](#), joista saa apua.

Screening media content for problematic content (Estonia)

-Media screening for keywords related to suicide (ca 100-150 media coverings a year)
-Peaasi.ee portal's users reports of inappropriate mediacoverage

Team members contact the journalist and editor of the coverage with friendly reminder how and in what circumstances suicide can be covered.

Follow-up and additional information to the media if needed.

Thanks!

Any questions?



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