American Association of Suicidology

National Suicide Prevention Week
September 6-12, 2020
Press Release Template

Helpful Hints:
The purpose of a press release is to convey information to the media. It serves as the first contact between you and the media.

Use your organization’s letterhead. Your press release should not surpass one page.

Be precise and direct. Use plain language and focus on “live,” “leading,” and “local.” This is an information sheet; no opinions, no fluff.

Your audience is journalists, and their audience is the general public. You want to pique the journalist’s interest into writing an article or contacting you for an interview.

If you have a program of events already established, include a copy with the press release. Send your press release to television stations, newspapers, or radio stations that are most likely to use it. Check out different papers to determine which ones print articles and advertisements with similar topics.

Disseminate your press release via email or through an established and reputable newswire service.

Develop or update your database of local journalists. Include television and radio reporters who regularly cover health, science, lifestyle or features or who have covered suicide or mental health issues in the past. Send the press release to them individually citing their previous work on the topic. If you are not sure who to write to, check your local library; they generally have a listing of media contacts.

You can send your press release to more than one media outlet; for example, you can send the same press release to many different local newspapers.

Content:
At the top left hand corner, the words “for immediate release” appear in bold, capital letters. Develop an eye-catching headline, insert it in bold and centered.

Your contact information should follow and include:
Name*
Title
Organization name
Address
Phone
E-mail address

*The name of your contact person will be the person most knowledgeable concerning the event in question

Then proceed to the big five questions: who, what, when, where, and why. Order the information by importance. Also, include specific information relevant to your community or state, as well as national statistics.

Emphasize new points (first time event, new activity, special appearance). If your event has an angle, use it. The media likes innovative and unique ideas.

Include an “About [Your Organization]” section at the very end of your press release.

End the press release with a double-return and “###” centered at the bottom of the page

Include a Pitch:
In the email with your press release, include a pitch (usually no longer than a paragraph or two) effectively explaining who you are and why you are promoting your events. Include your contact information (address, phone numbers, and email address) in case reporters wish to follow-up on your information.

If you have volunteers who are willing to share their personal stories, mention such a possibility in your pitch. Oftentimes, the media will include real life stories; it personalizes the article. If the event you are trying to promote is time sensitive, include such information in the letter. For example, “This article was written partially in light of the upcoming National Suicide Prevention Week from September xth to xth.” This will help the editor determine when to put it to print.
Suicide Prevention Week for 2020 is set for September 6th through 12th. [Your state] ranks [rank] in the nation in its rate of suicide deaths.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States with one suicide occurring on average every 10.9 minutes.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among 15 to 24-year-olds.

Firearms accounted for over half (24,432) of all suicides in 2018.

Approximately 1.2 million Americans attempt suicide each year.

It is estimated that 5.1 million living Americans have attempted to kill themselves.

Every year in the United States, more than 22,018 men and women kill themselves with a gun; two-thirds more than the number who use a gun to kill another person.

[Include a quote discussing your local event for NSPW] from one of your staff or local subject matter expert.] [Your staff person] is available to discuss these and other facts about suicide.

Suicide specialist, [your contact person], [position at your agency], is an expert in the areas of suicide assessment and intervention. [Include other information about the person’s skills, expertise, and services available at your agency].

To arrange an interview or for future information, please contact [your contact person] at [phone number].

About [Your Organization]: