

STRIVING FOR ZERO EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Striving
for
Zero

STRIVING FOR ZERO

Preventing Suicides through an Innovative Safe Reporting Tool for Media

County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services Department

Research has shown that media coverage of suicide can be a contributing factor to suicidal behavior. To understand compliance with national safe reporting guidelines and to focus its limited resources in targeted work with the media, the County of Santa Clara Suicide Prevention Program pioneered the Tool for Evaluating Media Portrayals of Suicide (TEMPOS). TEMPOS is the first tool that allows media professionals, public health officials, researchers, and suicide prevention experts to score and compare how well news media articles and publications follow safe messaging guidelines. The Suicide Prevention Program applied TEMPOS to a large dataset of suicide-related news articles from June 2018 (when two public figures, Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade, died by suicide in the same month), to provide baseline data for the Program's safe messaging efforts. At the end of 2023, the Program completed a follow-up evaluation using TEMPOS. The results are helping the Program to monitor and improve upon its safe messaging programming. TEMPOS has its own dedicated web page and is featured as a resource on www.ReportingOnSuicide.org. The tool is also a focal point of webinars developed by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Stanford University's Media & Mental Health Initiative, and the County of Santa Clara Suicide Prevention Program, and has been shared with the US House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

An Academic-Community Partnership: the TEMPOS Development Team

Chloe Sorenson, MSW
Stanford University
Class of 2013

Megh Len, MPH
Santa Clara County
Suicide Prevention

Vicki Harrison, MSW
Stanford Center for Youth
Mental Health & Wellbeing

JJ Singh, PhD
Stanford University
Class of 2022

Song Kim, MSW
Stanford Center for Youth
Mental Health & Wellbeing

Shashank Joshi, MD
Stanford University

Sila Patel, PhD
Palo Alto University
Psychology

Jay Donoghue, MPH
Santa Clara County
Suicide Prevention

TEMPOS

Tool for Evaluating Media Portrayals of Suicide

Why is TEMPOS an important tool for media professionals?

TEMPOS is the first tool that allows media professionals, public health officials, researchers, and suicide prevention experts to assess adherence to the recommended reporting guidelines with a user-friendly, standardized rating scale. The scale can be used to monitor changes in reporting over time and how reporting varies across articles, authors, and publications.

reporting on suicide

Best Practices and Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide

The Tool for Evaluating Media Portrayals of Suicide (TEMPOS): Development and Application of a Novel Rating Scale to Reduce Suicide Contagion

Chloe Sorenson, Megh Len, Vicki Harrison, JJ Singh, Song Kim, Shashank Joshi, Sila Patel, Jay Donoghue

Abstract: Research suggests that media adherence to suicide reporting recommendations in the aftermath of a highly publicized suicide event can help reduce the risk of imitative behavior, yet there exists no standardized tool for measuring adherence to these standards. The Tool for Evaluating Media Portrayals of Suicide (TEMPOS) allows media professionals, researchers, and suicide prevention experts to assess adherence to the recommendations with a user-friendly, standardized rating scale. An interdisciplinary team of nine university-level researchers led by a public health professional, researchers, and suicide prevention experts to assess adherence to the recommendations with a user-friendly, standardized rating scale. An interdisciplinary team of nine university-level researchers led by a public health professional, researchers, and suicide prevention experts to assess adherence to the recommendations with a user-friendly, standardized rating scale.

1. How does the report frame the suicide?

2. Does the report include factual and non-speculative information about suicide?

3. Does the report use appropriate/non-stigmatizing language?

4. How does the report describe the suicide method and scene?



SCAN ME TO VISIT OUR COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM WEBPAGE!