

Why we advocate not to use the term “committed suicide”

In the current FLASH manual on page 45 and 48 (True & False statements) the term committed suicide is stated. This will be changed in the next printing order. We do not now use the term committed suicide.

The phrase ‘committed suicide’ is considered insensitive. It is advisable now to avoid saying the phrase ‘committed suicide’ since this language can be considered stigmatising. The verb “commit” (when followed by an act) is generally reserved for actions that many people view as sinful or immoral i.e. we often say people ‘commit murder’ or ‘commit fraud’ but someone who dies by suicide is not committing a crime.

Some people advocate for using the term “completed suicide” instead. However, this term can be considered problematic, as to complete something conveys success; to leave something incomplete conveys failure.

It is now recommend using the phrase, *died by suicide*. Just as someone can die of heart disease, using the phrase to die by suicide allows us to communicate more compassionately—and accurately—about those who have passed.

Stigmatising language	Appropriate language
Committed suicide	Died by suicide
Completed suicide	Ended his/her life Took his/her own life
Failed attempt at suicide	Non-fatal attempt at suicide
Unsuccessful suicide	Attempt to end his/her life

Source

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