

# Study Shows Newspaper Reporting Overlooks Best Practices when Reporting a Celebrity Suicide Death

Articles not adhering to suicide reporting guidelines, but experts say parents can help by starting conversations about mental health

Nationwide Children's Hospital

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Package Length: 2:01	Content provided by: <b>Nationwide Children's Hospital</b>

## NEWS PACKAGE

<b>SUGGESTED TEASE</b>	<p>WHEN A CELEBRITY DIES BY SUICIDE, THE WAY THE TRAGEDY IS COVERED IN THE MEDIA IS VITAL TO PREVENTING SUICIDE CONTAGION, WHICH IS WHEN ONE SUICIDE LEADS TO MORE THROUGH IMITATION.</p> <p>COMING UP, A STUDY SHOWS MORE CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE STORIES ARE OFFERING HOPE AND REDUCING HARM.</p>
<b>ANCHOR LEAD</b>	<p>WHEN A CELEBRITY DIES BY SUICIDE, RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THERE IS OFTEN AN INCREASE IN SUBSEQUENT SUICIDES.</p> <p>THE WAY THE MEDIA COVERS THESE TRAGIC EVENTS CAN EITHER CONTRIBUTE TO SUICIDE CONTAGION OR HELP PREVENT FUTURE SUICIDES. THERE ARE SPECIFIC REPORTING GUIDELINES THAT, IF FOLLOWED, CAN HELP.</p> <p>BUT A NEW STUDY SHOWS THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE TO ENSURE THESE POTENTIALLY LIFESAVING GUIDELINES ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED IN EVERY STORY, EVERY TIME.</p> <p>BARB CONSIGLIO HAS THE DETAILS.</p>
<p><b>(PACKAGE START) -----</b></p> <p><b>CG: Courtesy: Nationwide Children's Hospital</b> <b>:00 - :03</b> Shots of newspaper articles</p> <p><b>CG: Arielle Sheftall, PhD</b> <b>Nationwide Children's Hospital</b></p>	<p>(Nats - Sound) :02</p> <p>MEDIA RESPONSE TO A TRAGIC CELEBRITY DEATH BY SUICIDE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE OTHERS IN CRISIS LIFE-SAVING TOOLS AND A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE MENTAL HEALTH PLAYS IN SUICIDE. :05</p> <p><i>"We never know where people are when they are reading these stories and when they're reviewing them online."</i> :05</p>

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<p><b>CG: John Ackerman, PhD</b>  <b>Nationwide Children's Hospital</b></p>	<p><i>"Media can have a big role in not only preventing contagion but actually encouraging prevention activities, coping and making sure that individuals in a crisis can access the support that they need."</i> :13</p>
<p>Shots of Ackerman in office</p>	<p>RESEARCHERS AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL STUDIED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES THAT COVERED THE SUICIDES OF FASHION DESIGNER KATE SPADE AND CELEBRITY CHEF ANTHONY BOURDAIN.</p>
<p>Shots of journalist looking at reportingonsuicide.org</p>	<p>THEY FOUND THAT, ON AVERAGE, ARTICLES FOLLOWED JUST HALF OF THE FOURTEEN REPORTING GUIDELINES DEVELOPED BY JOURNALISM ORGANIZATIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS TO HELP ADVISE MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA ON WHAT THEY SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T INCLUDE WHEN REPORTING ON SUICIDE.. :22</p>
<p><b>Arielle Sheftall (CG'd earlier)</b></p>	<p><i>"Following the guidelines can actually truly make a difference and can actually decrease the likelihood of someone taking their own life."</i> :08</p>
<p>Shots of Arielle reviewing articles</p>	<p>TWO CRITICAL GUIDELINES WERE ABSENT FROM EVERY SINGLE ARTICLE STUDIED. :04</p>
<p><b>Arielle Sheftall (CG'd earlier)</b></p>	<p><i>"None of them conveyed a hopeful message about how suicide can be prevented. None of them actually gave mental health resources or talked about how mental health resources specifically could reduce the likelihood of suicide occurring."</i> :15</p>
<p>Shots of a reporter viewing guidelines online</p>	<p>THE GUIDELINES ARE EASILY ACCESSED ONLINE, AND EXPERTS ALSO ENCOURAGE JOURNALISTS TO CONSULT OTHERS IN THE NEWSROOM FAMILIAR WITH THE THEM SUCH A HEALTH REPORTER.</p>
<p><b>John Ackerman (CG'd earlier)</b></p>	<p><i>"We can really tell stories that matter. So, I think, if we're doing this together, we have a much better shot at being successful."</i> :07</p>
<p>Shots of a parent talking to child</p>	<p>WHILE THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE, PARENTS CAN HELP BY TALKING TO THEIR KIDS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH WHEN THESE STORIES ARE IN THE NEWS. :05</p>
<p><b>John Ackerman (CG'd earlier)</b></p>	<p><i>"What we need to do is to make sure that we as adults take a calm, curious approach and try to learn more about what that young person is experiencing."</i> :07</p>
<p>Shots of parent and child</p>	

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<p><b>Arielle Sheftall (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of parent and child</p> <p><b>(PACKAGE END) -----</b></p> <p><b>ANCHOR TAG</b></p>	<p>EXPERTS SAY THIS CONVERSATION SHOULD START EARLY AND OFTEN, AND NOT JUST IN TIMES OF TRAGEDY OR CRISIS. :06</p> <p><i>“If we just have one conversation, that might potentially lead to saving a life, and I think it’s worth it every, single time.” :09</i></p> <p>AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL, THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING. :03</p> <hr/> <p>ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND EASIEST OF THE REPORTING GUIDELINES IS TO INCLUDE THE PHONE NUMBER FOR THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE, WHICH WAS ONLY IN ABOUT TWENTY PERCENT OF THE ARTICLES STUDIED.</p> <p>THIS IS CRITICAL TO ENSURING ANYONE WHO NEEDS HELP HAS AN IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE RESOURCE. OPTIONS FOR TEXTING ARE ALSO AVAILABLE. ADDITIONAL TOOLS TO HELP PARENTS START THE CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH WITH THEIR KIDS AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THEY HAVE CAN BE FOUND AT ON-OUR-SLEEVES-DOT-ORG.</p>
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### SOCIAL MEDIA

<p> <b>Share it! Suggested tweet:</b></p> <p> <b>Suggested post:</b></p>	<p>A new study by <a href="#">@NationwideKids</a> found newspaper articles did not consistently follow reporting guidelines following the suicides of Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain, which can elevate suicide risk. There was a missed chance to highlight information about suicide prevention and crisis resources to those in need. <a href="http://bit.ly/36mUAGW">http://bit.ly/36mUAGW</a>.</p> <hr/> <p>When a celebrity dies by suicide, it is critical for journalists to follow suicide reporting guidelines to prevent suicide contagion. But a new study by <a href="#">Nationwide Children’s Hospital</a> found newspaper articles did not closely follow those guidelines when covering the suicide deaths of Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain. <a href="http://bit.ly/36mUAGW">http://bit.ly/36mUAGW</a>.</p>
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### EXTRA BITES

	<p>Sheftall says the guidelines help provide support when it’s needed:</p>
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<p><b>CG: Arielle Sheftall, PhD</b>  <b>Nationwide Children’s Hospital</b></p>	<p><i>“I think it is an opportunity for newsrooms to actually see, hey, let’s try to help individuals that are connecting to this story and connected to this person and to get them the resources that they need.” :13</i></p> <p>Sheftall says providing the Suicide Prevention Lifeline is critical: <i>“Having the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. That’s number one because we never know where people are when they’re reading these stories, and having a resource available is important.” :08</i></p> <p>Sheftall says including messages of hope and providing resources is important: <i>“Deadlines, due dates, word limits – I understand that completely. But I think those two key factors could actually really help someone when they are reading these articles or when they are seeing those things online.” :14</i></p>
<p><b>CG: John Ackerman, PhD</b>  <b>Nationwide Children’s Hospital</b></p>	<p>Ackerman says mental health experts and journalists can achieve common goals together: <i>“They want to get information out to the public. They want to make sure that those who are vulnerable have a chance to do better and to find hope and healing. And we can really tell stories that matter. So, I think, if we’re doing this together, we have a much better shot at being successful.”:19</i></p> <p>Ackerman offers tips to talk to young people about mental health: <i>“Young people are increasingly at risk for things like anxiety and depression. And we as parents need to be able to have these conversations. One great resource is OnOurSleeves.org at Nationwide Children’s Hospital. And that provides a lot of this information that families can use to understand these complex mental health topics in very usable, user-friendly ways.” :21</i></p> <p>Ackerman says reporting methods impact suicide contagion: <i>“There’s still some skepticism about whether or not reporting impacts suicide rates. And we’ve actually had over a hundred studies now to show that there are effects on the population level.” :12</i></p>

**References**

<sup>1</sup>Newspaper adherence to media reporting guidelines for the suicide deaths of Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain, **JAMA Network Open**, Nov. 1, 2019. Online: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2753786>.

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