

# Suicide Prevention Category

## Judging Form

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**Dear Judge,**

We encourage you to seek personal support if you become troubled by the content of this category. If you experience an emotional crisis, there are people available to help you by calling or texting **988**.

The entry you are judging is a short film in the suicide prevention category. Suicide is a complex and sensitive subject which needs to be addressed with compassion and knowledge. This category has special content that must be included and specific content that must be avoided for the safety of and respect for the audience. At any point if you are experiencing technical difficulties with the website, or have questions regarding the category description, please email [shanti@directingchange.org](mailto:shanti@directingchange.org) or call (619) 786-5622.

In advance, we appreciate your time.

**Safe Messaging Scoring Measures**  
**(Total Points Possible 60)**

**Does the film include a resource?**

*(Mark "Yes" if the film includes a resource such as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or another resource)*

**Why?**

*A key strategy to prevent suicide is to provide information about crisis and support resources.*

**Yes (5 points)**

**No (0 points)**

**How well does the film communicate a message about suicide prevention that is hopeful and focused on what someone can do to prevent suicide such as reaching out to a friend and seeking support?**

*(Please assess how well the message is communicated. It does not have to be stated verbatim, but could be implied through dialog or another creative way. Note that it does not have to be one of the messages below, as long as the message is focused on suicide prevention.)*

- **Know the Signs:** Most people show one or more warning signs, so it is important to know the signs and take them seriously especially if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.
  
- **Don't keep suicide a secret:** It is ok to break a friend's trust and share your concerns with an adult if you think your friend might be thinking about harming him or herself.
  
- **Reach out for help:** The film should encourage people to ask for help, reach out to a friend they are concerned about, or if a person talks about ending his or her life, to take him or her seriously and connect him or her to help.
  
- **Find the Words:** Asking someone "Are you thinking about suicide?" will not put thoughts of suicide in his or her mind. In fact, asking this direct question is important.

Award up to **25 points**  
( \_\_\_\_\_ points)

<p><b>Does the film do a good job of <u>not</u> oversimplifying the causes for suicide or how to get better?</b></p> <p><i>(Note: It is okay to talk about life problems that may increase a person’s risk of suicide such as family issues (divorce, abuse) or social issues (bullying, break ups), and to talk about these life problems as a possible contributing factor to why a young person might be feeling hopeless, drinking more or isolating themselves (which are warning signs for suicide), <u>but the film should not point to just one of these events as the cause of suicide</u>. The truth is that not one of these events “causes” suicide, usually a person is dealing with multiple tough situations and is showing warning signs.)</i></p> <p><b>Why?</b> Suicide should not be framed as an explanation or understandable response to an individual’s stressful situation (e.g. a result of not getting into college, parent’s divorce, break-up or bullying) or to an individual’s membership in a group encountering discrimination. Oversimplification of suicide in any of these ways can mislead people to believe that it is a normal response to fairly common life circumstances.</p> <p><b>Although picking up someone’s books when they fall is a nice metaphor, it often takes more than “a simple act of kindness” to save a life.</b> Remember that many people don’t know how they should respond to someone who is having thoughts of suicide. Use this opportunity to educate your fellow students and others about what to do, such as talking directly about suicide, seeking help from a trusted adult or calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If Yes award up to <b>15 points</b> (____ points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No (0 points)</p>
<p><b>Does the film <u>avoid the use of statistics</u> and avoid including statements that portray suicide or a suicide attempt as something that happens all the time?</b> <i>(Mark “Yes” if the film contains no statistics at all)</i></p> <p><i>It may seem compelling to get the audience’s attention by using statistics such as “a person dies by suicide every 18 minutes”. However, presenting the data in this format makes suicide seem common and might encourage a young person already thinking about ending their life to believe, mistakenly, that suicide is a common and acceptable solution to the problems they are facing- which is not true! Statistics are a complex factor in creating safe suicide prevention messages, so we recommend avoiding them altogether.</i></p> <p><b>Remember, this category is focused on raising awareness of prevention, not just convincing people that suicide is a problem.</b></p> <p><i>Note: If a film includes any statistic, mark “No” and the film will receive 0 points.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes or <i>not applicable to this film</i> (10 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No (0 points)</p>

**If applicable, does the film use appropriate language when addressing suicide?**

*(Mark "Yes" if the film uses the appropriate language, or if this doesn't apply to the film.)*

**Yes or not applicable to this film** (5 points)

**No** (0 points)

<b>Use</b>	<b>Do NOT Use</b>
<p><i>"died by suicide"</i> or <i>"took their own life"</i></p>	<p><i>"committed suicide"</i>  <i>Note: Use of the word commit can imply crime/sin</i></p>
<p><i>"attempted suicide"</i></p>	<p><i>"successful/completed" or "unsuccessful"</i>  <i>Note: There is no success, or lack of success, when dealing with suicide</i></p>

**Why?**

*The suicide prevention community is trying to clarify the ways in which people refer to actions related to suicide. The more clear and respectful we can when speaking about actions related to suicide, the more we will be able to remove misconceptions that prevent people from getting support.*

**Total Safe Messaging Score**  
(Points Possible 60 – see previous)

Technical and Creative Scoring Measures	Points Possible	Score
The film <u>creatively</u> explores this topic in a way that is positive, hopeful, and educational. (This is less about content, but about the creativity used to communicate the content.)	Up to 15	
The film is technically well-produced (focus, exposure, clear audio, good use of graphics and/or special effects, good pacing and flow).	Up to 10	
The film provides a clear and effective narrative (script and quality), it is easy to understand and it makes sense.	Up to 10	
The film creatively used colors, music or graphics to support its main message and set a positive and hopeful tone for the film.	Up to 5	
<b>Total Technical and Creative Score</b> (Points Possible 40)		
<b>Total Safe Messaging Score</b> (Points Possible 60)		
<b>Total Overall Score</b> (Out of 100)		

## Disqualifying Content:

**Submissions that include this type of content, or deemed to contain inappropriate content, will be disqualified.**

1. The film **SHOULD NOT** include portrayals of suicide deaths or attempts (such as a person jumping off a building or bridge, or holding a gun to their head). Portraying suicide attempts and means, even in dramatization, can increase chances of an attempt by someone who might be thinking about suicide and exposed to the film. Important distinction:

Be creative and cautious: If you are considering showing items someone might use for a suicide attempt in your film, we encourage you to think about the purpose and benefit of including this in your film. There are other ways to demonstrate that someone is thinking about suicide without showing a weapon. Can you convey the sentiment you are seeking without showing this? In general, it is best to avoid showing images of ways people might attempt suicide, especially weapons.

*Important distinction:* You can show a person thinking about suicide (e.g. looking at pills or standing at the side of a ledge), but you cannot show them actually taking a step off a ledge even if you don't show the person actually falling. In general, it is best to avoid showing images of ways people might attempt suicide, especially weapons. Also consider that showing images of items/ways people might harm

themselves might also be disturbing to those who have lost someone to suicide. Remember, we are focused on prevention and the most important part is educating others about how to help. If you have any questions about this, please [contact us!](#)

- 2. The film should be sensitive to racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation and gender differences, with all individuals realistically and respectfully depicted.**

## **Suicide Warning Signs for Youth**

Warning signs are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Most people show one or more warning signs, so it is important to know the signs and take them seriously especially if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change. ([www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org](http://www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org))

- Talking about or making plans for suicide.
- Expressing hopelessness about the future.
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above. Specifically, this includes significant:
  - Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situations
  - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
  - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
  - Recent increased agitation or irritability

The following is a list of emergency warning signs that require immediate action!:

- Threatening self-harm or suicide
- Person is in act of self-harm or suicide
- Person has a weapon or other lethal means
- Seeking weapons or means to self-harm
- Talking about death or suicide while acting agitated or anxious, or while under the influence of drugs or alcohol

These warning signs may not signal an emergency situation, but are signs that a person may be in need of help:

- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Hopelessness
- Isolation, loneliness
- Low self-esteem
- Significant personality change
- Dramatic mood changes
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, etc.
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Increasing use of alcohol or other drugs
- Putting his or her affairs in order (for example, giving away favorite possessions, or throwing away important belongings)
- Becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression (this could be a sign that a person has made a suicide plan)