

# Through the Lens of Culture – 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 at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

The entry you are judging is a 60-second 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 [stan@suicideispreventable.org](mailto:stan@suicideispreventable.org) or call (619) 518-2412.

In advance, we appreciate your time.

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

<p><b>Does the film include a resource?</b>  <i>(Mark “Yes” if the film includes a resource such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800)273-TALK (8255) or another resource.</i></p> <p><i>Why? A key strategy to prevent suicide is to provide information about crisis and support resources.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> (5 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> (0 points)</p>
<p><b>Does the film include captioning?</b>            Films are encouraged to be submitted in languages other than English, but all films in this category are required to include captioning, even if the film is in English.</p> <p><b>Mark “yes” if the film meets one of these criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The film is in English and includes captioning in English.</li> <li>• The film is in a language other than English and includes captioning in English.</li> </ul> <p><i>Why? Captioning will allow for a wider dissemination of films including to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> (10 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> (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"/> <b>Yes or not applicable to this film</b> (10 points)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> (0 points)</p>

**How well does the film explore suicide prevention through the lens of a particular culture?**

*There are many different definitions for culture, but here is the one we are going to use for the purposes of providing direction to our film makers: **Culture** is the characteristics and perspectives of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, ethnicity, nationality, religion, cuisine, social habits, sexual orientation, gender identity, a shared experience, music, arts and more. And when it comes to mental health and suicide prevention culture can influence how and if we talk about these topics, whether or not we seek help, what kind of help and from whom.*

Films should send a positive message about the importance of supporting others and how people can play a vital role in ensuring that all young people regardless of their culture, or group association, get the help they need.

***This can be done in many different ways that were provided in the submission criteria. (Note that it does not have to be one of the messages below):***

- **The film explores how encouraging people to seek help might look different depending on our culture and the way we were brought up.**
- **The film helps demonstrate that learning and talking about suicide prevention is okay and these are both keys strategies to prevent suicide.** Most people show one or more warning signs, so it is important to know the signs and take them seriously. 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.
- **The film explores generational differences: The way we think about and talk about suicide can be influenced by generational differences.**
- **The film demonstrates how cultural groups can provide support and strength when dealing with mental health challenges or an emotional crisis.**
- **The film is in a language other than English.**

If **Yes** award up to **20 points** (\_\_\_\_ points)

No (0 points)

**Does the film do a good job of connecting culture to suicide prevention?**

A film might do a wonderful job in presenting information about or from the perspective of a particular culture, but does it also make a connection to how this influences suicide prevention and help-seeking?

**When judging this specific criteria, please also consider that the film should not oversimplify the causes for suicide or how to get better.**

*It is okay to talk about life problems in general or those associated with a particular culture that may increase a person’s risk of suicide such as increased stigma or lack of support, and to talk about cultural issues as a possible contributing factor to why a young person might be feeling hopeless, or showing other warning signs for suicide, but the film should not point to a person’s culture as the cause of suicide. The truth is that not one thing “causes” suicide, usually a person is dealing with multiple tough situations and is showing warning signs.)*

*Another thing to consider is that although simple acts of kindness (e.g. 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.*

If Yes award up to **10 points** (\_\_\_\_\_points)

No (0 points)

**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.)*

<b>Use</b>	<b>Do NOT Use</b>
<p><i>“died by suicide” or “took their own life”</i></p>	<p><i>“committed suicide”</i></p> <p><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></p> <p><i>Note: There is no success, or lack of success, when dealing with suicide</i></p>

Yes or not applicable to this film (5 points)

No (0 points)

**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 be 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)