# Messaging Watch Outs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Say This</th>
<th>Say This</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>committed suicide</td>
<td>died by suicide, took their own life, ended their life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“unsuccessful” attempt</td>
<td>“interrupted” or “non-fatal” attempt or just say “suicide attempt”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“successful” attempt</td>
<td>“completed” attempt or “completed” suicide, fatal attempt, suicide death</td>
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<tr>
<td>“suicide death”</td>
<td>(“attempted suicide” is not preferable but sometimes unavoidable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>don’t describe a method or specific attempt in detail</td>
<td>OK to provide statistics about different kinds of methods (with language caveats above)</td>
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<tr>
<td>don’t suggest that suicides are due to a single cause or precipitating event</td>
<td>do note that warning signs may be hard to recognize, that suicide is multi-determined and complex.</td>
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<tr>
<td>suggest that suicide is inexplicable</td>
<td>Research is teaching us more everyday about what contributes to suicide risk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>directly link the increase in stress/anxiety amid COVID to an increase in suicide risk</td>
<td>always include suicide treatment and prevention resources whenever discussing suicide:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The 988 Suicide &amp; Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 or chat and learn more at 988lifeline.org.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[Can include specific resources as appropriate as well e.g. Trevor Project for LGBT and Veterans Crisis Line]</td>
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<tr>
<td>More people die of suicide each day than have died in the deadliest mass shooting in the U.S.</td>
<td>More people die of suicide each day than from firearm murders and unintentional shootings put together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guns are the most lethal method of suicide [without directly connecting to a safe storage CTA]</td>
<td>[for example] Guns are the most lethal method of suicide. That’s why storing firearms securely can help give our loved ones a second chance at life.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Don’t connect the increase in stress/anxiety amid COVID directly to increased suicide risk (people can be stressed without being suicidal)</em></td>
<td>Do quantify this with statistics and connect directly to suicide risk, e.g. 11% of Americans have seriously considered suicide amid the pandemic;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentally ill people</td>
<td>Those living with mental illness; people in crisis; people “living with a mental health condition or “experiencing mental health struggles”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>