

2021 Suicide Prevention Month | Talking Points for Public Comment

The San Mateo County Suicide Prevention Committee has created this document to provide guidelines on what you could say during public comment at a public meeting including (but not limited to) County Board of Supervisor, County Commission, City Council, City Commission and School District meetings.

TIPS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Review [this document](#) which details on how to structure your comment.
 - a. Structure: 1) introduce self, (2) provide supportive evidence and (3) close with your ask
 - b. You can use below content to inspire what you will say but you are not expected to include all of it.
2. Use safe and effective messaging on suicide prevention. Some tips included below from [this tip sheet](#).
 - a. Avoid discussing details about the method of suicide
 - b. Explain complexity of suicide, avoid oversimplifying.
 - c. Focus on prevention: avoid sensational language and images.
 - d. Use inclusive, destigmatizing language. Examples below.

Not Recommended	Recommended
“committed suicide” Note: Use of the word commit can imply sin or crime.	“die by suicide” “took their own life”
“unsuccessful suicide” Note: There is no success or lack of success when dealing with suicide.	“suicide attempt”

Messages for Unifying Voice

1. **The Suicide Prevention Month theme of “Supportive Transitions: Reconnect, Reenter, Rebuild”**
 - Transitions can be unsettling and stressful, impacting our mental health and increasing risk factors for suicide.
 - As we reenter and rebuild the fabrics of our daily life that were so fundamentally disrupted, reconnecting with supportive relationships and practicing positive coping skills is essential for our emotional well-being.
 - More information about SPM events at <https://www.smchealth.org/suicide-prevention-month>
2. **Many of us have been touched by the tragedy of suicide.**
 - We may have lost someone close to us or been moved by the loss of someone we may have never met.
 - Even if they knew the person was struggling, they may not have expected suicide would be the result.
 - However, many people who find themselves in a suicide crisis can and do recover.
3. **During all kinds of transitions, everyone can play a role in supporting each other and preventing suicide.**
 - Learn the warning signs
 - Finding words to reach out to someone
 - Sharing resources, including below 24/7 confidential crisis support lines.
 - Call 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) Suicide Prevention Lifeline (United States)
 - Call 650-579-0350 Star Vista’s Crisis Hotline (San Mateo County)
 - Text “BAY” to 741741 Crisis Text Line (United States)
 - More information and resources at www.smchealth.org/SuicidePrevention

Questions for Unique Perspective

1. Why is Suicide Prevention Month and this year’s theme “Supportive Transitions: Reconnect, Reenter, Rebuild” important to you?
2. What have you and/or your organization done successfully that may have helped prevent suicide in San Mateo County?
3. What specific need do you see in San Mateo County for those who think about, attempt or die by suicide?
4. What specific change do you want to see in San Mateo County to help prevent suicide?