



Armidale Community Radio Incorporated
Kentucky Street (P.O. Box 707)
ARMIDALE, New South Wales, 2350
PH: (02) 6772 1486
E: info@2arm.net.au
Website: www.2arm.net.au
ABN: 30 635 647 271

FM 92.1 Armidale Uralla Walcha Guyra

Your voice in the community

POLICY ON THE RESPONSIBLE REPORTING OF SUICIDE AND MENTAL ILLNESS

This policy is for guidance only and does not form part of the Community Radio Codes of Practice 2008.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the importance of reporting suicide and mental illness in a responsible manner.

BACKGROUND

Suicide is a prominent public health issue in Australia with over 2,000 people dying by suicide each year.

Some important facts about suicide are:

- rates of suicide are generally three to four times higher among males than females
- Many more people attempt than die by suicide with hospital admissions for intentional self-injury about ten times as common as deaths by suicide
- Migrants in Australia show similar suicide rates to those in their country of origin
- People in any form of custody have a suicide rate three times higher than the general population.

Mental illness is a major risk factor for suicide with psychological autopsy studies showing that up to 90% of people who suicide may have been experiencing mental disorder at the time of their death.

POLICY

In the reporting of suicide or mental illness, 2ARMFM will consider the following Issues:

- Should I run the story?
- Be careful with the language you use
- Don't be explicit about the method or location of suicide
- Discussion of celebrity suicide can glamorise suicide
- Consider the angle (or positioning) of the story
- Should you interview the bereaved? Is it necessary?
- Place the story in context
- Include helpline contacts in your story.

The Mindframe Media and Mental Health (MMMh) project is one of a suite of projects on suicide, mental illness and the media developed as part of the national media strategy. MMMh aims to build a collaborative relationship with the Australian media and mental health systems to enable a more accurate and sensitive portrayal of suicide and mental health issues across all news media in Australia.

A key activity of MMMh is the development of a resource kit for use by media professionals. It is available from: www.mindframe-media.info