|  |
| --- |
| **Language use when talking about suicide or attempted suicide**Guidance for Essex schools and education settings**Essex Educational Psychology** September 2024 |

**Use of the phrase ‘Sudden and Unexpected Death’**

* If a person within your community dies and information indicates possible suicide use 'sudden and unexpected death' rather than ‘suicide’ until a coroner has made a ruling of suicide.
* It may be that others within the community wish to discuss suicide as a theme which is very helpful to do, do not be afraid to use the word suicide in general.
* Discussions about suicide can be encouraged but in relation to the person who has died insist on a description of sudden and unexpected death.
* Be clear with families, young people and staff about why this language is important. Acknowledge possible frustration having to use different terminology but is a requirement due to the official procedures and also for respect for the families and friends of the person who has died (to not make any initial assumptions).

**Language**: Leading on from stigma there are often language barriers stopping helpful conversations about suicide or mental health.  There are helpful and unhelpful ways to describe or talk about suicide or attempted suicide:

**Do say:**

Ended their life Took their own life Died by suicide Killed themselves

Sudden and unexpected death (particularly if the death has not been named officially as a death by suicide)

Attempted to take their own life Engaged in suicide behaviours

** Avoid saying:**

Committed suicide (no longer a criminal offence)  Successful suicide

Unsuccessful/failed suicide It’s not that serious It was just a cry for help

You’re not thinking of doing something stupid/silly are you?

|  |
| --- |
| *Author: Senior Specialist EPS (SEMH)**Essex Educational Psychology- September 2024**Copyright © Essex County Council 2024**No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system of any nature, downloaded, transmitted or distributed in any form or by any means including photocopying and recording, without the prior written permission of Essex County Council, the copyright owner.* |