Example from ProRail: 10 tips for journalists for reports on suicide (2012). The text of the leaflet is translated below:

Suicide is a serious social problem in the Netherlands: approximately 1,700 deaths a year and 14,000 suicide attempts which lead to hospital treatment. In more than 90% of the cases it is not an intentional choice, but an expression of a psychiatric illness, often depression.

In the last couple of years, suicide has become less of a taboo among other things due to press reports. If good background information is offered, it can even help prevent suicide. Reports on specific suicide incidents can however be ‘dangerous’. People on the verge of suicide might get the idea that suicide is the only solution to their problem. Various studies show that this copycat effect is a real risk. When journalists take this into account, copycat behaviour can be prevented.

1. Be careful: Be as careful as possible in reports about suicide. Do not elaborate on an incident or its consequences.

2. No details: Do not describe the method or the means. People could think that this is effective: you can die and you will be in the news.

3. Do not romanticize: Watch out for reports being romanticized or dramatized. For example by quoting from a farewell letter or diary. In this way people who have ended their lives will not become heroes or martyrs, or someone who is contemplating suicide will not identify with the person.

4. Prevent simplification: Never describe suicide as a solution to a problem. Besides, do not link the suicide to one single cause or event. Suicides often have a long history, where several factors play a role.

5. Abstract image: Think if images really add something to the story. If an image is really necessary, choose abstract ones – and not images which directly point towards the method, such as a train or a drug strip.

6. Offer background information: When you make a general report about suicide, add good background information. For instance, mention the national crisis hotline 113Online.

7. Respect privacy: Respect the privacy of the deceased and his or her relatives. Especially family members have a higher risk of suicide, partly because they are troubled by shame, misunderstandings, ignorance or guilt. Unnecessary personal details about the suicide or the deceased will hit them hard.

8. Famous people: Be extra careful with reports on suicides of well-known or famous people. These articles and reports can have a greater impact on suicidal people and may lead to copycat behaviour.

9. Reliable sources: Refer to reliable sources of suicide and suicide-related subjects, such as the crisis hotline 113Online, the Trimbos Institute, the Dutch knowledge centre Fear and Depression and the Ivonne van de Ven Stichting centre.

10. Indicate that getting help does work: In the Netherlands about half a million people have suicidal thoughts. More than 99% get help on their own or through a professional. Getting help does work. By mentioning this, you can help prevent suicides.