

# Decriminalise Suicide Worldwide

Campaign Charter

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## Introduction

Suicide prevention is a public health priority for all countries. More than 700,000 lives are lost to suicide each year, which means more than 1,900 deaths per day. Around 77% of suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries. Suicide is a global leading cause of death globally (<https://www.who.int/health-topics/suicide>).

No one wants lives lost to suicide nor the tragic impact of a suicide on those who are left behind. Laws against suicide are barriers to people disclosing their suicidal thoughts or intentions, and seeking help. They foster social stigma towards people in crisis, who deserve instead our compassion, understanding and help.

Decriminalising suicide is not just about changing laws. It's a powerful action which upholds mental health is a universal human right and that suicide is preventable.



## Lifeline International's

### Vision

Our vision is a world without suicide.

This means providing access to quality suicide prevention support and openly encouraging its use. Individuals facing distress and despair should be met with compassion, support, and equitable access to crisis support rather than punitive measures - anywhere in the world. Through this campaign we will continue to save lives by removing barriers and ensuring that more crisis support services are available to more people, in more places.

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**Suicide, everywhere  
in the world,  
can be prevented.**

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## Decriminalise Suicide

### Worldwide

Decriminalise Suicide Worldwide is an open and inclusive, creative-lead and technology-enabled campaign by LifeLine International designed to catalyse decriminalisation in the 25 countries where suicide remains a crime due to laws and regulations, and 27 where the status of suicide remains unclear.

The campaign's primary objective is to decriminalise suicide and remove all legal barriers that prevent people seeking crisis support, while enabling crisis lines to commence operation, or where existing, improve their performance and efficiency.

The campaign will work to support mental health promotion and prevention as foundations for effective suicide prevention, along with service systems that link people to accessible care.

Our campaign's mission is to build a global community of passionate advocates for suicide prevention and empower them to actively support national decriminalisation campaigns, lending



international voices wherever and whenever they are needed. We will match supporters of change with the actors for change, bridging north and south, high- middle- and low-income countries, regardless of race religion or nationality.

Helping people during times of distress and despair is a fundamental trait of our shared humanity. This campaign will address one of the most complex barriers to actually doing so – the criminalisation of suicide and attempted suicide.

## Crisis Support Lines

We recognise that suicide is a multifaceted and complex challenge. There are many barriers inhibiting access to crisis support. Crisis lines are an immediate support service that can address the needs of a person in crisis and provide a pathway towards other forms of care and services. They reach people who otherwise would not approach others for help or use face-to-face services.

They can also adapt to local socio-cultural environment, and recruit people to answer calls and contacts to the service who are sensitive to national and community circumstances, building community resilience.

Where we actively campaign to change the law, we will foster or initiate a crisis line service, either as LifeLine International or through our network of partners. Where services exist, we will support and enhance their operations in the improved regulatory environment.



## Campaign Goals



### 01 Legal and regulatory reform

We will advocate for the removal of laws and statutes that criminalise suicide. We will work to ensure that these laws are replaced with laws and policies that emphasise crisis support, access to mental health care and suicide prevention in all nations, states, and regions.

### 02 Crisis support

Where we seek to change the law, we will enable the delivery of crisis support services. We will advocate for universal, affordable and equitable access to crisis support services.

### 03 Stigma reduction

We will challenge the stigma surrounding suicide and the experiences of crisis in people's lives. We will promote open discussions, awareness, and empathy to create an environment that encourages individuals to seek help in times of distress and despair.

### 04 Catalysing change

We will nurture and connect a global movement of changemakers, encouraging the sharing of knowledge, skills and resources to support decriminalisation efforts. We will build a knowledge sharing platform to help facilitate this exchange.

# Campaign Principles

## 01 Global collaboration

We will encourage international cooperation to address this global issue. Suicide knows no borders, and together, we can work towards a world where there are no legal barriers to suicide prevention.

## 02 Equity

We are committed to ensuring all individuals, regardless of their background, have equal and affordable access to crisis support. We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to receive the help they need in times of need, free from judgement, discrimination, or disparities.

## 03 Compassion and Empathy

We believe in responding to those who experience suicidal crisis with empathy and compassion. Punitive measures only exacerbate suffering and do not address the root causes of suicide.

## 04 Community-Based

We will draw on the historic association with communities that crisis line organisations hold to include people from all backgrounds in the campaign's activities, thereby linking with and strengthening 'caring communities' throughout the world that are made up of people who promote the importance of connection with each other as an intrinsic feature of crisis support and mental health. We shall use the digital knowledge management platform and the communications functions of the campaign to bring people and communities together to join the movement for change.

## 05 Human Rights

We affirm that every person has the right "to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" as per the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations 1966). Criminalising suicide is a violation of these fundamental rights.



**Suicide knows no borders, and together, we can work towards a world where there are no legal barriers to suicide prevention.**

# Campaign Behaviours

## and Actions

### 01 We will prioritise safety and wellbeing

We commit to using safe, inclusive language in our communications. We will provide help-seeking messages and links to care and service pathways, including access to crisis support services. Safety and wellbeing will inform how we deliver the campaign.

### 02 We will engage sensitively and constructively with communities and their leadership

We commit to working with governments, civil society, businesses, policy advisors, academic experts and professionals, local communities, families, and individuals themselves in the process of destigmatisation and reform. We will be sensitive to cultural, religious, and social contexts, recognising that solutions may vary across countries, regions and communities.

### 03 We will be evidence-informed

We commit to taking an informed approach, basing our advocacy and policy recommendations on scientific research and evidence. We will implement and advocate for strategies that have been proven effective in preventing suicide and promoting crisis support.

### 04 We will measure our impact

Through our knowledge management platform, we commit to tracking the actions taken across our network and will monitor and report on our collective impact over time.

### 05 We will work collaboratively and cooperatively

We commit to working collaboratively and cooperatively with like-minded organisations, and institutions to advance our cause and leverage collective strengths for the campaign.

### 06 We will be transparent and accountable

We commit to maintaining good governance and decision-making processes. We will hold ourselves accountable for the commitments we make to the campaign and its stakeholders. We will uphold the reputation of LifeLine International and its Members throughout the campaign activities.





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