



THE SPEEDY FOUNDATION

thespeedyfoundation.org

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Use of Jeret “Speedy” Peterson’s 911 Call

Safety and Hope are the Keys to Prevent Additional Deaths by Suicide

Suicide is a public health issue. Media and online coverage of suicide should be informed by using best practices. Some suicide deaths may be newsworthy. However, the way media cover suicide can influence behavior negatively by contributing to contagion, or positively by encouraging help-seeking action.

Risk of additional suicides increases when the story explicitly describes the suicide method, uses dramatic/graphic headlines or images, and repeated/extensive coverage sensationalizes or glamorizes a death. **Suicide Contagion**, or "**Copycat Suicide**," occurs when one or more suicides are reported in a way that contributes to another suicide.

Due to TMZ releasing Speedy’s 911 call and the Washington Post’s “Up in the air: The life of Speedy Peterson” younger athletes were made aware of the details of Speedy’s death and have reported traveling to that site and experimenting with ending their own lives. We ask that those who use Speedy’s story do so with extreme caution and concern.

Covering suicide carefully, even briefly, can change public misperceptions and correct myths, which can encourage those who are vulnerable or at risk to seek help.

The Peterson Family and The Speedy Foundation Board recognize that Jeret Peterson made the call to 911 prior to ending his life. We are aware that the call is public domain; it is also not advised to use it for many reasons. Below are some dos and don’ts when it comes to suicide:

- Big or sensationalistic headlines, or prominent placement (e.g., “US Olympic skier Jeret Peterson commits suicide in Utah”) are to be avoid, including photos/videos of the location or method of death, grieving family, friends, memorials, or funerals is to be avoided.
- Suicide is complex. There are almost always multiple causes, including psychiatric illnesses that may not have been recognized or treated. However, these illnesses are treatable.



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- Refer to research findings that mental disorders and/or substance abuse have been found in 90 percent of people who have died by suicide.
- Avoid reporting that death by suicide was preceded by a single event, such as a recent job loss, divorce, or bad grades. Reporting like this leaves the public with an overly simplistic and misleading understanding of suicide.
- Consider quoting a suicide prevention expert on causes and treatments. Avoid putting expert opinions in a sensationalistic context.
- Use your story to inform readers about the causes of suicide, its warning signs, trends in rates, and recent treatment advances.
- Add statement(s) about the many treatment options available, stories of those who overcame a suicidal crisis, and resources for help.
- Include up-to-date local/national resources where readers/viewers can find treatment, information, and advice that promote help-seeking.

If you are interested in learning more about how to safely message stories on suicide, please refer to the following resources and reach out to an expert.

- <https://mailchi.mp/31bde301b354/mediasuicideprevention>
- <http://reportingonsuicide.org/recommendations/>
- <http://reportingonsuicide.org/ask/>
- <https://www.thespeedyfoundation.org/safe-messaging>

We do not give permission nor approval to use Jeret's 911 call and request that extreme discretion be used as to not sensationalize his or any death. For additional discussion on this topic, please reach out to the contact information detailed in this press release. Safety and hope are the keys to prevent additional death by suicide. There are ways to tell Speedy's story through a hopeful lens without using his 911 call.

Sincerely,

Linda Peterson, Mother
Erika Finks, Sister
Shannon Decker, TSF Exec. Director & Cousin
Tyler Neill, TSF Board President & Friend
Erin Hudson, TSF Board Secretary & Friend
Katie Flood, TSF Board Treasurer & Friend
Kim Jeffrey, TSF Board Member
Colleen Creighton, AAS Executive Director
Chris Maxwell, AAS Communications Director



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[The Speedy Foundation](#) is dedicated to preventing suicide, supporting mental health and promoting conversations to end the stigma surrounding both. TSF was formed in 2011 in the loving memory of Jeret “Speedy” Peterson, an Olympic freestyle aerials medalist whose life was characterized by his service to others.

[American Association of Suicideology](#) was founded in 1968 by Edwin S. Shneidman, PhD, AAS promotes suicide as a research discipline, public awareness programs, public education and training for professionals and volunteers. The membership of AAS includes mental health and public health professionals, researchers, suicide prevention and crisis intervention centers, school districts, crisis center volunteers, survivors of suicide loss, attempt survivors, and a variety of lay persons who have in interest in suicide prevention.