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Mr Ian Beales
Secretary
Editors' Code of Practice Committee
PO Box 235
Stonehouse
Glos GL10 3UF

September 12 2008

Dear *Ian*

Thank you for meeting us recently and for the copy of The Editors' Codebook. We both felt that it was a useful discussion and provided additional insight into the remit and functioning of the Code of Practice Committee.

It was most encouraging to hear that you too are concerned about copycat suicides and that this was the main reason for an amendment of clause 5 which refers to excessive reporting of suicide method. We quote from The Editors' Codebook:

Copycat Suicide: In 2006, after considering international evidence highlighting the dangers of imitative deaths following reports of suicide, the Code committee introduced a new sub-clause requiring that care be taken, when reporting suicide, "to avoid excessive detail about the method used."

Whilst acknowledging that this was an important move in the right direction we do not believe that it is sufficient. Copycat suicide does not happen solely as a result of publicising detail of method.

We therefore propose four suggestions that we respectfully ask both you and the Code Committee to consider.

1. That '*reporting suicide*' should be a separate clause as distinct from *Intrusion into grief and shock*.
2. The current wording to be replaced by: *When reporting suicide care should be taken to avoid any detail that may contribute to copycat suicide, such as detail of method or location.*
3. This statement to be supported by detailed Guidance Notes on the reporting of suicide.

Patrons:

Rt Hon David Hanson MP
Simon Hughes MP
Rt Hon David Heathcoat-Amory MP

Hon. Adviser:

Prof Mark Williams
University of Oxford

HOPELineUK
08000 68 41 41

Lodge House
Thompson Park
Ormerod Road
Burnley
BB11 2RU
tel 01282 432555
fax 01282 432777
e-mail admin@papyrus-uk.org
web www.papyrus-uk.org

Registered charity no.1070896
Company Limited by Guarantee no.3555482

Founded by Parents for the **Prevention** of Young Suicide

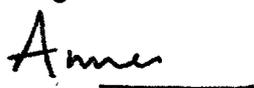
4. That you consider removing the word 'excessive' from the current and any future clause for the reasons we discussed with you (see our discussion document 11th August 2008)

We believe that a general statement - item 2 above - encompasses all scenarios that may contribute to copycat suicide. The reference to 'detail' in the statement could be defined / clarified in the Guidance Notes.

In conclusion, we hope that we were able to convincingly demonstrate to you that POPYRUS has a valuable insight into the subject of suicide and we wish to support the media industry in whatever way we can to play its part in prevention.

We hope that our suggestions are realistic in terms of their being easily adopted and we look forward to your response once you have had the opportunity to discuss them with your colleagues on the Code Committee.

Kind Regards



Anne Parry
Chair / POPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide

Rosemary Vaux
POPYRUS Press Officer

c.c. Tim Toulmin