

Finding the Right Words: School-Based Suicide Prevention and Postvention Practices

Invited lecture · Vita Poštuvan

Prof. Vita Poštuvan works as a researcher and Deputy Head of the Slovene Centre for Suicide Research (UP IAM) and Department of Psychology (UP FAMNIT) at the University of Primorska. She leads the work related to clinical-research and public-health interventions in suicidology, bereavement, crisis interventions and psychotherapy. She has participated in major European and Slovenian studies in the fields of (public) mental health, suicidology and psychology, which were published in international journals. She has worked at the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry (NCNP) in Tokyo, Japan as well as in the Suicide Research Group, Department for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, Medical University of Vienna, Austria, as a fellow researcher. Her professional work is also focused on psychological counselling, psychotherapy and prevention. She is a member of the national unit for psychological research within civil protection.

Abstract. The trends in youth suicides have changed in recent years. There were declining trends that began around the turn of the millennium in various parts of the world. But in recent years, sporadic increases have been observed in several countries. There are many possible reasons for this. Some believe that the increase in depression is the main cause of this rise. Other reasons could be related to changes in society, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crisis, increasing loneliness among young people and the associated increased use of social media, exposure to suicidal behaviour or even the decreasing feeling that the world is a safe and good place. In addition, data on adolescent development suggests that puberty is starting earlier, which could have an impact on mental health. These changes have implications for how we implement school-based prevention and postvention interventions, which we will present.