

# when you lost someone to suicide...

Know that you're not alone. Healing from a shocking and unexpected suicide loss is not a linear progression, but you will move forward from the place where you are now, and you don't have to go it alone.

## some facts

Every death by suicide leaves behind at least 130 people who report they knew the person who died. Of those, at least 1/3 feel very close to the person who died and might need professional support. However, **you do NOT have to be close to the person to feel the impact of a suicide.**

## about suicidal grief

How is it different from grief following other kinds of death?

**1**

### meaning-making

Suicide loss survivors tend to struggle more with making sense of the death. It is not uncommon to question the motives and frame of mind of the deceased (e.g. "Why did they do it?")

**2**

### guilt & self-blame

Suicide loss survivors show higher levels of feelings of guilt, blame, & responsibility for the death than other mourners. They may blame themselves for not anticipating and preventing the act of suicide. Some common thoughts include, "If only I had...", "Why didn't I prevent it?"

**3**

### anger towards the deceased

Unlike other kinds of death, suicide loss survivors may experience heightened feelings of betrayal and abandonment by the deceased, along with anger toward them (e.g. "How could they do this to me?")

If you find yourself feeling any of the above, remember that whatever you are feeling during this time is a human reaction to an extremely stressful loss. You have just suffered a severe emotional shock. It is **OKAY** to take things one day at a time.

Your thoughts and feelings about the loss may also be informed by other factors including:

- what you know about suicide
- your previous experiences with sudden loss
- cultural and religious beliefs

**text MIND to 741741**

for 24/7 confidential mental health  
support from Crisis Text Line

**call 9-8-8**

to speak to a crisis counselor

# coping with a suicide death

our minds matter

Know you can survive the pain. There may be times when you don't think so, but you can.



**There is no one right way to grieve a suicide loss, and you may find people around you grieving in different ways. That is OK. You, too, are allowed to experience your grief in your own way and at your own pace. Here are some helpful tips:**

1

## understanding suicide

There is no single cause of suicide, and many factors may contribute to a suicide death, including but not limited to mental illness. While trying to seek answers is a normal part of the grieving process, it's likely that you'll be left with questions that can never be answered. Even if you uncover the answers, it won't ease the grief you're experiencing or change the past. In time, however, it is possible to move beyond the "Why?" and accept that you may never fully know why.

2

## let go of guilt, anger, & blame

Suicide is not caused by somebody and it is certainly not your fault too. You may feel guilty for what you THINK you did or did not do. It is important to understand that anyone can miss the warning signs. We can never truly know what's going on in someone else's head, any more than we can predict the future! Also, try to separate responsibility from blame - whether the blame is directed at yourself, your loved one, or another person. Forgiveness and compassion are key to healing...

3

## caring for yourself

Allow yourself to feel & express your emotions - be it via journaling, arts & craft, exercising, or any other coping skills. Suppressing your feelings could prolong the grieving process. Expect ups and downs - some days your grief may seem more manageable than others. Tend to basic self-care, and be patient with yourself!

4

## reach out for support

Don't try to tough this out on your own. Leaning on others for support can help ease the burden of grief, even if it's just drawing comfort from being around supportive friends and family who care about you. When you feel ready, you may want to talk about what you're going through. It is also okay to share memories, stories and joyous aspects of your relationship with the deceased with others who loved them. Remember, your loved one's life was about more than their suicide. Their final act doesn't need to define their life or your relationship with them.