



Death by Suicide

Grief is a normal process of mourning after a death. Please refer to our help sheet on Loss and Grief for the emotions you may be experiencing and some suggestions on how to cope and work through them.

When we experience a death by suicide, we still experience the emotions of grief, but there are usually additional emotions when grieving a death by suicide.

Grief following a death by suicide are generally more intense, longer lasting, and you find yourself dealing with unexpected turns and insights. Be assured that whatever emotions you are feeling or experiencing are normal. Feelings are not right or wrong. They are just part of who we are. You may experience some or all the following.

Confusion:

Why did my loved one make the choice to take their life. It make no sense.
Did I miss a signal that could have prevented this?
What if I...?
If only I...!

Blame

There are so many unanswered questions
Although blame can be an emotion experienced after any death, it is more intense after a death by suicide

Shame

There is a stigma that many attach to death by suicide. You may withdraw and isolate because of the way death occurred.
You may feel abandoned by others who should understand.

Betrayed

You may feel rejected because you judge you or your relationship was not good enough.

PTSD

It is normal to feel stressed and frightened long after a death by suicide. Nightmares and flashbacks are not uncommon

Despair

You may have suicidal thoughts. How can I go on living without him/her.

No one thing, person, or event leads a person to choose suicide. It is a result of many factors-feelings of hopelessness, a release from a life full of pain, chaos, and despair.

So how do you work through all these reoccurring emotions?



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Keep in touch

Although you may need private time and space to process everything, don't abandon family, friends, spiritual leaders, or anyone willing to listen. Sharing where you are at is an important part of healing.
Be honest about what happened.

Grieve in your own Way

Everyone grieves differently. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. But give yourself permission to feel, to cry. Don't rush yourself. Takes as long as you need to process everything and work through your grief, regardless of where others suggest you should be in the process.
If it is too painful to visit your loved one's grave site or share the details of your loved one's death, wait until you are ready.

Be prepared for painful reminders

This is common for any death but are more vivid and unpredictable after a death by suicide
Emotions will come and go, often triggered by significant events.

Expect setbacks

Some days may be better than others. And that's okay. Healing doesn't follow a straight line.

Consider a support group

See references below. Opening up to those who understand because they have experienced loss by suicide too can be very therapeutic.

Know when to seek professional help

If you are feeling intense, unrelenting anguish and physical problems long after the loss, you may benefit from professional help.

If you are having suicidal thoughts, call 988 or chat at <https://988lifeline.org/chat>

RESOURCES

Download Warning Signs of Suicide – Fact sheet for family and community members

<https://sprc.org/resources/warning-signs-of-suicide-a-fact-sheet-for-family-and-community-members/>

Survivors of Suicide Loss (SOSL)

<https://www.soslsd.org> Local Support groups

Living with Suicide <https://www.pbs.org/weblab/living> Read other's stories, post questions



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[Grief after Suicide PDF](#)

After Suicide Do's and Don'ts

<https://tipsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/After-a-Suicide-Dos-and-Donts.pdf>

Suggestions for Survivors of Suicide

<https://tipsandiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Suicide-Suggestions-For-Survivors-of-Suicide.pdf>

[Responding to Survivors of Suicide PDF](#)

[Talking to Children and Teens about suicide PDF](#)

Suggestions to help Children cope with Suicide

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/telling-children-teens-about-suicide-death.aspx>

Children, Teens, and Suicide Loss

<https://aws-fetch.s3.amazonaws.com/flipbooks/childrenteenssuicideloss/index.html?page=1>

Download After Suicide Toolkit for Schools

<https://sprc.org/resources/after-suicide-toolkit-schools>

Children's suicide flipbook

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/telling-children-teens-about-suicide-death.aspx>

San Diego Catholic Diocese resources:

<https://sdcatholic.org/family-life-and-spirituality/healing-pathways-for-families/suicide-awareness/>

For complicated grief – Grief after a violent loss and/or lasting more than a year see General Grief page.

Books

No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Loss of a Loved One by Carla Fine

Healing After the Suicide of a Loved One by Ann Smolin and John Guinan

After a Suicide: A Workbook for Grieving Kids by the Dougy Center for Grieving Children

Living When a Young Friend Commits Suicide by Earl Grollman

Someone I Loved Died by Suicide: A Story for Child Survivors and Those Who Care for Them by Doreen Cammarata

But I Didn't Say Goodbye: For Parents and Professionals Helping Child Suicide Survivors by Barbara Rubel

For more resources, support groups and Catholic therapists, contact Rich at hello@thechurchofstluke.org