

Navigating Grief After Suicide Loss

Grief is a natural response to loss, but when a loved one dies by suicide, it can be especially complex. Shock, confusion, and self-blame are common, alongside deep sorrow. Seeking support and expressing emotions can help in navigating this difficult journey.



The Impact of Suicide Bereavement

Suicide loss can affect both physical and mental well-being. Those grieving may experience:

- Shock, numbness, or denial
- Searching for answers ('Why?')
- Guilt or self-blame
- Anger or resentment
- Despair and hopelessness
- Stigma and shame
- Loneliness and disconnection
- Depression
- Thoughts of suicide themselves

Finding Support After a Suicide Loss

While the pain of losing someone to suicide does not fade quickly, there are ways to cope:

- Allow yourself time. It's okay to take breaks from your grief and engage in activities you enjoy, even if it feels difficult.
- Stay connected. Lean on friends, family, or support networks to reduce isolation.
- Honour their memory. Talk about them, keep a journal, or share photos and memories.
- Take care of yourself. Eat well, exercise, rest, and avoid excessive alcohol or drug use.
- Prioritise tasks. Focus on what is essential and delay major decisions until you feel ready.
- Seek professional support. A counsellor, psychologist, or helpline can offer guidance and comfort.
- Join a support group. Connecting with others who have experienced a similar loss can help you feel less alone.

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How to Support Someone Bereaved by Suicide

If someone you know is grieving a suicide loss, you can help by:

- Listening without judgment
- Accepting their emotions, including anger, guilt, or sadness
- Encouraging them to express their feelings and share memories
- Including them in your usual activities
- Avoiding phrases like 'move on' or 'get over it' – grief takes time
- Encouraging them to delay major life changes until they feel ready
- Checking in and offering ongoing support
- Asking if they are having suicidal thoughts and seeking professional help if needed

Supporting Children Bereaved by Suicide

Children process grief differently from adults and need extra support. You can help by:

- Speaking honestly in a calm and safe environment
- Reassuring them that the loss is not their fault
- Answering their questions in an age-appropriate way
- Encouraging them to express their feelings through words, play, or art
- Seeking professional support if they are struggling to cope

If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide, seek help immediately. You are not alone, and support is available.

Reference: [Lifeline Australia – Suicide Bereavement](#)

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