

Coping after suicide loss: Support for survivors

Losing someone to suicide is a deeply painful and life-altering experience. The grief that follows can feel confusing, isolating, and overwhelming. The following pages offers support, understanding, and practical tools to help you find your way through.

Based on guidance from the [Handbook for Coping with Suicide Grief \(2024\)](#), this resource is for survivors of suicide loss — whether you're a friend, partner, family member, or community member affected by suicide.

What makes suicide loss different?

Grieving after suicide often includes a wide range of complex emotions, including:

- Shock or disbelief
- Guilt or blame
- Anger or confusion
- Shame or social stigma
- Intense questioning (“Why did this happen?”)

You may replay conversations, wonder if there were missed signs, or struggle with feeling abandoned. These are all normal responses, and you're not alone in feeling them.

What can help?

There's no "right" way to grieve, but support and understanding can make a real difference.

Here are some key ways to care for yourself after a suicide loss:

Allow your emotions

It's okay to feel whatever you're feeling — even if it changes day to day. Try not to judge yourself or rush your grief.

Stay connected

Lean on trusted friends, family, or a therapist. Isolation can make grief harder to manage.

Learn about suicide and grief

Grief is exhausting. Make space for rest, eat when you can, and be gentle with yourself.

Take care of your mental and physical health

Make space for rest, eat when you can, and be gentle with yourself.

Join a support group

Connecting with others who've experienced suicide loss can help you feel less alone and more understood. Look for in-person or virtual groups.

Common questions after suicide loss

Following a suicide loss, it's normal to have questions. Here are some of the most common ones.

"Could I have prevented this?"

It's natural to question what you could've done differently. Suicide is rarely the result of a single event — and it's not your fault.

"Should I tell people it was suicide?"

That's a personal choice. Speaking openly may reduce stigma and help others understand the truth, but your safety and comfort come first.

"What do I tell children?"

Use age-appropriate language, be honest, and provide reassurance. Kids often pick up on tension and may benefit from extra support.

Honoring the person you lost

You can carry your loved one's memory forward in meaningful ways:

- Create a memorial or ritual
- Write letters or journal about your grief
- Support suicide prevention in their honor
- Talk about them and the life they lived — not just how they died

Resources for survivors of suicide loss

- [Alliance of Hope](#): Community and healing resources for loss survivors
- [AFSP Healing Conversations](#): Peer support from trained suicide loss survivors
- [Doug Center](#): Grief support for children, teens, and families
- [American Association of Suicidology](#): Resources, support groups, and information



You're not alone

Grieving after suicide is a journey, and everyone's experience is unique. Whatever you're feeling or carrying, know that you deserve support. There's no shame in grief, and no wrong way to move through it.

If you're struggling to cope, or if you're worried about your own safety, please reach out:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**: Call or text 988, 24/7
- **Crisis Text Line**: Text HOME to 741741
- **Find a therapist**: [Rula](#) can help you connect with a licensed therapist who accepts your insurance and has appointments available as soon as tomorrow.

Source: [Handbook for Suicide Grief](#); AAS