

What Helps

People who have experienced a suicide loss have shared what has helped them.

- ◆ Work at understanding that you have experienced a traumatic loss.
- ◆ Be patient in allowing yourself your reactions and feelings of grief.
- ◆ Seek out those persons who give you comfort.
- ◆ Avoid or limit contact with people who complicate your grief or tell you how to feel.
- ◆ It's okay to let people know what you do and do not want to talk about; they may have questions but you do not have to satisfy their curiosity.
- ◆ Practice self-care along with caring for others.
- ◆ Gain information and skills through reading and using available resources.
- ◆ Discuss your feelings and responses with other loss survivors, such as in a support group.
- ◆ Take comfort in any progress you make in surviving your loss.

This brochure was adapted from one issued by the Center for Suicide Awareness, Fox Valley, WI

Local Resources

Nevada & Placer

County Health Departments

Call to access support services and to speak with someone who cares:

Program Manager:

(530) 582-7747

Suicide Prevention Coordinator:

(530) 265-1731

Tahoe-Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition

Website: www.tahoelifeline.org

Email: tsuicideprevention@gmail.com

Crisis Resources

Emergency Response: 9 1 1

Nevada County Crisis Line:

(530) 265-5811

Placer County Emergency Access Line:

(888) 886-5401

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

(800) 273-8255 [TALK]

Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio:

(888) 628-9454 (Spanish)

Regional Resources

The Compassionate Friends:

(877) 969-0010

www.compassionatefriends.org

Friends for Survival:

(916) 392-0664

www.friendsforsurvival.org

Help and Support After a Suicide



Loss Survivors of Suicide

A sudden death can be a traumatic experience for loss survivors. A death by suicide adds a unique set of challenges for those who are left behind. This information is meant to help you understand what happens after a suicide.

Reactions

People report some or all of these reactions which are not the same for everyone. They may come and go like waves or they may feel constant and overwhelming.

- ◆ Physical symptoms in response to trauma.
- ◆ Feeling shock and numbness.
- ◆ A sense of disbelief; the events seem unreal.
- ◆ Loss of concentration and inability to focus.
- ◆ Guilt for having been unable to prevent the death.
- ◆ Anger at the person, others, self, or God.
- ◆ Relief, if following a difficult struggle with illness or behavior.
- ◆ Anxiety and worry about yourself or others.
- ◆ Questioning what you or others did or did not do.
- ◆ Deep and profound sadness.

Understanding Why

A suicide can bring about questioning and searching for an answer to “Why would this person end their own life?”

- ◆ Suicide involves complex factors and is not the result of a single event.
- ◆ Those who die are usually seeking to end unbearable psychological pain that may have been apparent or hidden and not shared.
- ◆ A point was reached where the pain was greater than the person’s resources to tolerate it or to see other solutions.
- ◆ Some questions may remain unanswered as to why.

A Different Grief

There are reasons that a death by suicide may feel different than other losses you have experienced. These can complicate the grieving process.

- ◆ Police and other authorities need to be involved in the death investigation.
- ◆ When suicide is ruled as the cause of death, the reasons may remain a mystery.
- ◆ There may be a final note or communication involved. The message or lack of message can raise questions for loss survivors.
- ◆ Religious confictions may arise concerning your own beliefs or the beliefs of others who are reacting to the suicide death.
- ◆ With a suicide death, certain stigmas are associated with it.

Talking to Children About Suicide

Discussing suicide can be difficult for adults when there are many unanswered questions. Explaining the death to children is challenging, but important. Find resources to help respond to children at www.tahoelifeline.org

- ◆ Children may not talk about the death, or they may repeatedly ask about it.
- ◆ Children need to hear age-appropriate information about death and suicide from a trusted person.
- ◆ Suicide involves complex factors and is not the result of a single event.
- ◆ Telling the truth is essential.
- ◆ Expect a variety of reactions including fear that others may die.
- ◆ Anxiety is likely to arise around being separated from caregivers, even for short periods of time.
- ◆ Talk with school staff or others involved in the child’s life about what has happened.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for questions and reactions through activities and other creative outlets.
- ◆ Talk about and remember the person who died.
- ◆ Separate who the person was, from the manner of death.
- ◆ Share your own feelings of grief with your child.
- ◆ Reassure the child that they will be cared for and you will be there for them. Tell them that even though you may feel sad right now, you will not always feel that way.

