

Your Loved One Died by Suicide — Where Do You Start?

Why This Matters

Suicide loss can bring complex grief—shock, guilt, anger, unanswered questions. Healing is possible, but it often requires specialized support and patience.

First 48 Hours

- Identify a point-person to handle immediate logistics (funeral home, death certificates).
- Reach out to trusted friends or clergy to help with practical tasks—meals, childcare, notifications.
- Limit exposure to media or social platforms until you feel ready.
- Consider postponing major decisions; cognitive clarity may be impaired by grief shock.

Navigating the Grief Journey

- Understand that feelings of guilt or blame are common but rarely match reality.
- Seek a therapist trained in ‘complicated grief’ or ‘suicide bereavement.’
- Join peer groups such as AFSP Healing Conversations or Survivors of Suicide Loss meetings.
- Create a remembrance ritual: memory box, letter-writing, annual day of reflection.

Supporting Children & Teens

Use age-appropriate language (“died by suicide” rather than euphemisms). Reassure them it’s not their fault and that feelings of sadness or anger are normal. Maintain household routines for a sense of safety.

Self-Compassion Practices

- Acknowledge waves of grief—don’t judge your timeline.
- Set small, daily goals (eat breakfast, take a short walk).
- Lean on faith or spiritual practices if they comfort you.

Key Resources

- AFSP Healing Conversations: afsp.org
- Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors: allianceofhope.org
- Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741 (USA)
- International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day events