



When Someone Dies by Suicide

Someone you care about has died by suicide. Unimaginable thoughts and feelings are swirling around in your head and body. A sense of shock may take over, as endless questions of why and how abound. Remember to take time to be gentle with yourself and understand that the many feelings you are experiencing are natural.

Understanding what has happened...

As you begin to process what has happened, it is important to recognize that most people who end their own lives are suffering from a mental health condition. When that is the case, the person's thinking becomes clouded and they are unable to think clearly about ways to deal with their emotional pain and anguish. While there is often a sense of shame or stigma surrounding a death by suicide, learning more about this topic and finding a place to process your feelings may help. Remember that their death is a result of a mental health condition, rather than character weakness or intent to hurt family and friends.

What you may experience as you begin your journey of grief...

- You may immediately experience a sense of shock and disbelief as you try to make sense of the devastating news.
- Wondering what to tell others may cause you to feel ashamed or worried about what they will think.
- Feelings of guilt may arise while questioning what you could have said or done differently and what warning signs you may have missed.
- Angry feelings may be directed at the person who died, mental health or medical professionals, family members, or yourself.
- Questions about "why" may haunt you.
- You may find yourself thinking about or replaying images of final days, last conversations, or the scene of the death.
- You may experience relief, as the suicide was the result of a long and painful struggle.
- You may notice changes in your sleep patterns, appetite, and energy level.
- Just as being surrounded by family and friends may bring a sense of comfort, you may also need moments of solitude.

Give yourself time...

- Although people may expect you to return to your "old self", you are forever changed. Allow yourself time to readjust to your life without your dear one.
- Over time, your feelings will ebb and flow. While the raw pain will ease, your feelings, memories, or images may be triggered at the most unexpected times.
- Be gentle with yourself as you discover ways to honor the memory of the person who died.

Remember you are not alone as you move through your journey of grief. There is great value in sharing your thoughts, feelings, and memories with someone you trust.

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