

## Grief after a suicide

### Grief after suicide is especially hard.

Many things affect how you experience someone's death, including:

- your relationship with the person who died,
- other deaths you have experienced,
- how you cope in difficult times,
- your personal beliefs, and
- your family and culture.

Even when people grieve for the same person, you may each have different experiences. Some feelings may be the same, but others may be different. Each person's grief is individual.

### Your world may feel broken.

When something so unexpected happens, like a suicide, we feel shaken. Our world can feel broken. We may start questioning other things in our lives, too. Trust and hope may be hard to find and maintain. Please know:

- These feelings won't last forever.
- You will come to understand your new world.
- It's OK to "not have all the answers."

### Be kind to yourself – especially now.

When someone dies by suicide, some people blame themselves. They may think about:

- conversations that had "clues,"
- warning signs they "missed," or
- things they "could have" said or done.

The truth is you DID NOT KNOW this suicide would happen. You only knew what you knew at the time.

### Many people feel overwhelmed.

When very difficult things happen (trauma), the brain changes the way it works. The brain often responds in ways that:

- make it hard to think clearly, prioritize, or remember things, or to follow a conversation or find the right words when you want to speak;
- make you feel unexpectedly angry or irritable, or restless or anxious.
- make you feel more emotional than usual.

### How to get your focus back

Try one or more of these ways to get your focus back:

- Breathe slowly and focus your vision on a nearby object for 30 seconds.
- If you are sitting, notice how the chair supports your bottom and legs.
- If you are standing, notice how the floor feels against your feet.
- Take a walk, or move in place – jump, shake, dance.

### Each person's grief is different.

It is human to grieve and mourn. Some people:

- cry,
- reach out to others to give and receive support,
- talk about the person who died,
- wear a black armband,
- share their feelings.

You may feel you "have to be strong."

*Remember:* Showing your feelings takes courage and strength. It will help you *and* your loved ones.

### Grief has no clear path or time limit.

Grief is messy. And grief is different for each person. Accept that your grief will be whatever it will be.

#### **Any moment can take you on grief's journey.**

A photo, a birthday, a favorite place, a song... many things can remind you of the person that died and how heartbroken you are to live without them. This is all part of grief's journey.

### Need help with grief?

YoloCares offers grief support to adults and children. And it's **free**. If you live in Yolo, Solano, Colusa, Sutter, or Sacramento, contact us:

Tel: **530-758-5566**

Email: [griefsupport@yolocares.org](mailto:griefsupport@yolocares.org)

#### *Other online resources:*

[suicidepreventionyolocounty.org/](https://suicidepreventionyolocounty.org/)

[www.dougy.org/grief-support-resources](https://www.dougy.org/grief-support-resources)

[allianceofhope.org/](https://allianceofhope.org/)

[suicidology.org/resources/](https://suicidology.org/resources/)

[friendsforsurvival.org/](https://friendsforsurvival.org/)

[childrengrieve.org/resources/griefftalk-resource-guides](https://childrengrieve.org/resources/griefftalk-resource-guides)