

Surviving Suicide

Common Feelings

- Shock and disbelief
- Pain and sadness
- Numbness
- Confusion
- Guilt and responsibility
- Loneliness, isolation and yearning
- Anger
- Blame
- Relief
- Shame
- Fear
- Embarrassment
- Abandonment and rejection
- Self-pity
- Feeling as if your soul has died with your loved one
- Worry

Physical Reactions

- Aches and pains
- Fatigue
- Upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Insomnia
- Hypochondria
- Inability to eat
- Headaches and dizziness

Other Commonalities

- Difficulty concentrating
- Preoccupation with the deceased
- Disorganization
- Overprotective of other relationships
- Depression
- Belief that nobody else could know what you are going through
- Experience your own thoughts of suicide
- Belief that you are being punished
- Think things will never be the same or that you will never get over the loss
- Continually revisit past conversations)
- Think “if only” and play out the situation over and over in your head
- Perception (real or imagined) that others are judging and blaming you
- Attempting to figure out whose “fault” it was
- Feeling that time moves impossibly slow

**“What the heart has once
owned and had,
it shall never lose.”**
– Henry Ward Beecher

All of these feelings are common and appropriate. Each individual, couple and family grieves differently. There is no right or wrong way to mourn; what is helpful to one person may not be for another.

“You have to go through pain, let it come, experience it and don’t fight it, because you’re going to go through it at some time or another.”

The pain may never be over but your own growth and gaining of strength over time will make it acceptable.

“We did not plan, nor want, nor envision that our loved one would ever take their own life, but it is a fact and we can live with it knowing that we have made it this far. It can show us a new understanding of loving, caring and the warmth of the friendship of others.”

You may go through an agonizing journey of mourning to the wonder of survival.

*Irwin, Tricia. 'Life After Suicide.' BC Woman to Woman. Vol. 3., No. 17.
December 1988.*

*Bolton, Iris. "Our Son Mitch," Suicide and Its Aftermath: Understanding and Counseling
the Survivors. Edited by Dunn, Edward J., McIntosh, John L., and Dunne-Maxim, Karen. W.W. Norton and Company.
New York, 1987.*

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Suicide survivors are frequently avoided because there is still such a stigma of taboo surrounding suicide which can leave them feeling trapped for years in lonely grieving.

Denial is confusing and frightening and can have long term harm. If we deal honestly and realistically with losses and mourn them, we are prepared to go on. Ask yourself if your guilt is realistic and how much responsibility you really have. We all have some impact on our loved one's life, but if there was something you missed it wasn't because you wanted them to die. Maybe you could've paid more attention but you're human.

You have a choice to make. You can destroy yourself or try to find meaning and purpose in your loved one's life and death.

Feelings can be so personal, private, and utterly your own that the thought of sharing them with another is difficult, even years later. But, through discussing and sharing our losses with others in similar situations, we can proceed to make the journey through the pain and anguish.

Find a reason to go on living – regain a new sense of hope.

Reach out and seek support

Ways to Seek Help

- Friends
- Counseling
- God (if you believe)
- Support Group
 - To tell stories to remember, to cry and to laugh again
- Speaking with other survivors
- Books
- Family
- Helping Others (you can help yourself by helping others)

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