

How To Help a Suicide Loss Survivor



Suicide loss is often complex and traumatic. It is usually unexpected and can be violent in nature. This type of loss can activate post-traumatic survival reactions in addition to emotions associated with non-traumatic grief and mourning.

The ripple effects a suicide loss has can be immense. Family, friends, coworkers, classmates, and first responders are just some examples of the people impacted.

The Power of Listening: Connecting with Loss Survivors

- Focus on them
- Listen in a non-judgmental way
- Stay humble, stay teachable. It's their experience and their grief.

A helpful easy-to-read resource:



Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation



614-429-1528 | support@ohiospf.org
ohiospf.org | 175 South 3rd Street
Suite 700 Columbus, OH 43215

Compassionate Responses

- "I can't imagine how upset you must have been."
- "I'm not sure anyone can fully understand how hard this has been on you."
- "It sounds like..." (this is such a shock, you have several people you are concerned about...).
- "It's difficult to think you will feel normal again when such a hard thing has happened to you."
- "This isn't how it was supposed to be."
- "That's understandable" (instead of "I understand").

Supportive Communication

- Use safe language – died by suicide
- Say their person's name
- Recognize potentially hard dates
- Consider asking specifically how and when you can follow up with them. ("May I text you next week to check in?")

By simply listening and gently engaging with a loss survivor, you can provide a safe space for them to share and feel heard.



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