

Finding Peace after Losing a Loved One to Suicide

Before you read: This content talks about suicide prevention. Some linked sources may include sensitive topics. Our goal is to raise awareness, promote prevention and care for readers' well-being.

In the United States, someone dies by suicide about every 11 minutes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Each death leaves behind family members, friends and others who are grieving. Many survivors struggle with deep pain and often blame themselves.

If you lost someone to suicide, you may have painful questions. You might wonder, "Why didn't I see it?" or "Could I have stopped it?" These thoughts are common. The truth is hard to accept but important to hear: you can do everything right and still lose someone to suicide.

You Cannot Know Everything

It is natural to look back and search for signs. But many people hide their pain. Some do not speak up because they do not want to worry others. Others fear being seen as a burden. Some feel safer sharing with strangers than with loved ones. Many people do not tell anyone about their suicidal thoughts at all.

Because of this, survivors often feel heavy guilt. You may feel confused, angry or ashamed. These feelings are real and valid. But you are not responsible for the choice another person made.

Grief after suicide can also increase the risk of depression, anxiety and trauma (National Library of Medicine). Some people experience long-lasting grief that makes daily life feel hard. If this sounds like your experience, know that you are not alone and that help can make a difference.

Grief after Suicide Feels Different

Losing someone to suicide often feels unlike any other loss. There may be stigma, unanswered questions and constant "what if" thoughts. You may feel pressure to explain the death or defend your feelings.

You may never fully understand why it happened. Suicide is complex.

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Less than half of people tell anyone that they're thinking of suicide, are making plans or had an attempt in the past.

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Many factors can play a role, and not all of them are visible, even to those closest to the person. Healing can start when you shift your focus. Instead of asking “why,” you might begin asking:

- How can I honor their memory?
- How can I care for myself today?
- How can I keep moving forward, one step at a time?

You Deserve Care and Support

Your grief matters. You deserve compassion and support.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available to anyone in emotional distress, not only for emergencies. Trained counselors are available by call or text, day and night. Support groups for suicide loss survivors, therapists trained in grief and online communities can also help you feel understood.

You do not have to carry this pain alone. Help is available, and healing is possible, even if it takes time.

#StopSuicide

If someone is in crisis, encourage them to call the **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** at 988 or 800-273-8255. Help is free, private and available all day, every day.

Reviewed by Clinical Consultant, LMHC.

Call 911 if someone is in immediate danger or a life-threatening emergency requiring immediate physical intervention. If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally, feeling overwhelmed, anxious, hopeless, in crisis, or simply needs someone to talk to, call or text 988 for free, confidential support 24/7. The 988 Lifeline is available to anyone in the United States or U.S. territories. People do not have to be suicidal or in immediate danger to call or text 988. There is also a chat feature available on 988lifeline.org. Lucet members can contact us to connect with free resources and find care.