

Finding Peace After Losing a Loved One to Suicide

A note before reading: This piece contains links to sources that may include sensitive content. We include these source links to provide context for our research. Our intention is to help increase suicide awareness, prevention and sensitivity, while also doing the most possible to be responsible and protective of our readers.

Every 11 minutes, someone in the United States dies by suicide (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). According to the latest CDC data, 49,000 people died by suicide in 2023, each one leaving behind a network of grieving loved ones who may feel they are to blame.

If you've lost someone to suicide, you might struggle with agonizing thoughts and questions: Why didn't I see it coming? Was there something I missed? Could I have stopped it? The truth can bring both heartbreak and relief: you can do everything "right" and still lose someone to suicide.

You Aren't a Mind Reader

It's normal to search for signs in hindsight, but suicide is often cloaked in silence. People experiencing suicidal thoughts may choose not to share their struggles with those closest to them, in part because they don't want to cause worry, or they mistakenly think they will become a burden. In some cases, individuals may be more likely to disclose emotional pain to acquaintances or even strangers because it feels safer or less personal. In fact, less than half of people tell anyone at all that they're thinking of suicide, are making plans, or have attempted suicide in the past (Clinical Psychology Review).

This can leave survivors feeling consumed by guilt. Research shows that people bereaved by suicide are at greater risk for depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicidal thoughts themselves (National Library of Medicine). Some experience what's known as complicated grief — a prolonged, intense mourning that can interfere with healing (National Library of Medicine). If this resonates with you, know that your pain and confusion are valid and normal, but understand that you are not accountable for a choice that someone else made.

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Clinical Psychology Review

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Grief after Suicide Is Different

Losing someone to suicide can feel unlike any other kind of loss. There's the stigma, the questions, the overwhelming thoughts of "what if." Survivors often feel they need to explain the death or justify their own emotional reactions to it. You may never fully understand why it happened, because suicide is deeply complex and often influenced by an interplay of internal and external factors — many of which aren't visible, even to those closest to the person.

You can begin to make peace with the loss by giving yourself permission to stop asking why and start asking how: How can I honor their memory? How can I care for myself? How can I keep moving forward?

You Deserve Support, Too

If you're grieving a suicide loss, your healing matters. You deserve support and compassion. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline connects anyone in emotional distress — not just those in crisis — with trained counselors. Survivor' groups, therapists who specialize in traumatic grief and online communities can also offer comfort from others who understand what you're going through.

#GrowThroughGrief #GriefSupport

If you or someone you know is struggling with a loss and needs support, you can find more resources at [Good Grief](#).