

Suicide Survivor (Bereavement) Support Group

A support group for Survivors of Suicide Loss meets monthly on the first Wednesday of each month, 6:00-7:30 PM Mountain Time, via Zoom. This peer led group is for family and friends who have lost someone to suicide.

More information on the group, including log in information, may be obtained by contacting Mark Houser, 307-690-5419 (cell) or at mhouser@mhrsjh.org. Mark is also available to talk with survivors at times outside the monthly meeting. All contact is confidential and without cost.

If you have lost someone to suicide, the first thing you should know is that you are not alone. Each year over 40,000 people in the United States die by suicide. The family and friends they leave behind are known as “survivors”. There are millions of survivors who, like you, are trying to cope with this loss. Survivors often experience a wide range of reactions. The following information is provided by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:

- Some survivors struggle with what to tell other people. Although you should make whatever decision feels right to you, most survivors have found it best to simply acknowledge that their loved one died by suicide.
- You may find that it helps to reach out to family and friends. Because some people may not know what to say, you may need to take the initiative to talk about the suicide, share your feelings, and ask for their help.
- Even though it may seem difficult, maintaining contact with other people is especially important during the stress-filled months after a loved one's suicide.
- Keep in mind that each person grieves in his or her own way. For example, some people visit the cemetery weekly while others find it too painful to go at all.
- Each person also grieves at his or her own pace; there is no set rhythm or timeline for healing.
- Anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays may be especially difficult, so you might want to think about whether to continue old traditions or create some new ones. You may also experience unexpected waves of sadness; these are a normal part of the grieving process.
- Children experience many of the feelings of adult grief and are particularly vulnerable to feeling abandoned and guilty. Reassure them that the death was not their fault. Listen to their questions, and try to offer honest, straightforward, age-appropriate answers.
- Some survivors find comfort in community, religious, or spiritual activities, including talking to a trusted member of the clergy.
- Be kind to yourself. When you feel ready, begin to go on with your life. Eventually starting to enjoy life again is not a betrayal of your loved one, but rather a sign that you've begun to heal.

More information on suicide loss can also be found at:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org/ive-lost-someone>
American Association of Suicidology <https://suicidology.org/resources/suicide-loss-survivors/>
Suicide Awareness Voices of Education: <https://save.org/what-we-do/grief-support/>
Alliance of Hope <https://allianceofhope.org/>

Suicide Prevention Hotline, Text Line and Local Resources

If you are at immediate risk or know someone who is, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by calling 988, or call 911. You can call 988 if you are at risk or if you are concerned about someone who is exhibiting suicidal ideation.

You can also text 741741 from anywhere in the United States to text with a trained crisis counselor. The crisis can be suicidal ideation or any painful emotion for which you need support. Your opening text can say anything, as simple as “Hello” or “Start”. Your first two responses will be automated, letting you know you are being connected with a Crisis Counselor and inviting you to share a bit more

Individuals can receive professional help by contacting the Jackson Hole Community Counseling Center at 307-733-2046 (24 hours a day crisis number).