

Support After Suicide

Zusman Hospice Bereavement Support



When someone close to you commits suicide, you will experience the normal emotions associated with the grief process as well as challenges unique to that type of loss. The following reactions are common among suicide survivors.

Shame

There is still a stigma associated with suicide in our society. It may be difficult for us to openly talk about what happened. When we do not talk openly, we tend to suppress feelings, and this takes a great deal of emotional energy. There might be media attention around the suicide, and our private lives are suddenly on public display.

Guilt

If we try hard enough, we can find a thousand ways to blame ourselves for the death. We may interpret the suicide as a statement that we or others had failed the deceased. We may feel that others are judging our competency as a spouse, parent or in another role.

Anger

We may be angry about the choice the suicide victim made, and we might be angry about the method chosen, or about being the one who discovered the body. The death may make us feel rejected, which makes us both sad and angry. We may feel that someone else's action or inaction contributed to the suicide. It is confusing to feel anger at a dead person, and we may feel guilty about our anger.

Fear and Anxiety

We may be afraid of our own self-destructive impulses. We may fear that our family is somehow fated. We may feel generally vulnerable and wonder if we could survive anything else bad happening.

Depression

Depressed feelings are a normal reaction to loss. When someone close commits suicide, survivors experience feelings of anger, guilt and helplessness, when combined can produce deep depression. When we interpret a loved one's suicide as a personal rejection, our feelings of depression and despair are heightened.

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Ambivalence

We may find some relief in the death and wonder if we should be feeling that way. Our relationship with the deceased person may have been strained or filled with tension and pain for many years. If the deceased had a long history of self-destructiveness, we may have been exhausted emotionally by the time the attempt was completed.

Scapegoating

Survivors sometimes blame one or more people for the death. This can be a way to redirect anger from the deceased or ourselves. If we direct a lot of energy outward, we sometimes temporarily avoid the deep inner feelings of grief.

Re-experiencing the Trauma

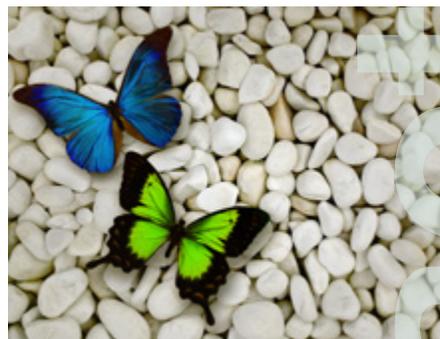
Severely traumatized people usually experience a set of reactions called post-traumatic stress reaction. Recurring vivid recollections, powerfully disturbing dreams and the feeling that we are re-experiencing the traumatic event are part of this.

Isolation

Feelings of shame, guilt and anger may make it difficult for us to talk about our loss. We may feel safest seeking out a support group for suicide survivors, or talking with someone who has had a similar experience.



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Grief support is available to you and your loved ones from the Zusman Hospice Bereavement Staff.

We offer support through phone calls, individual counseling and group sessions. Please contact us at **614-559-0350**.

This is what I have learned:
Within the sorrow, there is grace. When we come close to those things that break us down, we touch those things that also break us open.

– Wayne Muller

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