

How You Can Be Supportive AFTER A SUICIDE OR OTHER TRAUMATIC LOSS



After a suicide or other traumatic death, we often struggle on how to best support a grieving family member or friend. Survivors of suicide loss are deeply impacted by the suicide of someone close to them, such as a family member or friend.

Here are some ways you can support people who are affected by suicide loss:



Acknowledge the loss

Because of the history of shame or stigma associated with suicide, survivors of suicide loss often feel that people are nervous talking to them about the loved one who died. Reach out to a suicide loss survivor the same way you would with anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one. If you are unsure of how to help, begin with “I am so sorry for your loss. I don’t know what to say, but I am here for you.” Respect their readiness for further discussion about the loss; they may or may not be prepared to talk about their loved one’s passing.



Use the name of the person who died

Survivors are working to accept the reality of the death of someone they loved. Using the person’s name is often seen as you connecting with the loss and acknowledging the person’s life, as well as their death. This is especially important if you knew the person who died.



Share your presence

Grieving following any loss is a personal journey. Each individual mourns and processes their grief in a unique way. After a suicide death, the grieving process can be complicated and might include feelings of shock, anger, or guilt. Be there for a loss survivor without trying to “fix” their feelings. You can be present for them by sharing a cup of coffee, lunch, taking a walk together, or listening on the phone as they talk.

To talk with someone who will listen and help connect you to support: Contact griefsupport@namimaine.org or 1-800-464-5767, ext. 2317

For more information, visit NAMI Maine
After Suicide or Traumatic Loss



