

It's okay to cry. It's okay to heal: We do not need to "prove" that we loved the person who has died. As the months pass we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel "guilty", for this is not an indication that we love less. It only means that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death and its finality of the pain our loved one suffered. It's a healthy sign of healing. It's okay to heal."²

Below are suggestions for online and print resources that may be helpful.

www.cmha.ca/mental_health/grieving

www.camh.ca/en/education

<http://suicidegrief.save.org/ResourceLibrary>

www.dougy.org/grief-resources

www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

Suicide Survivors: A Guide for those Left Behind
by A. Wroblewski

**No Time to Say Goodbye:
Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One**
by C. Fine

Siblings after Suicide: "The Forgotten Bereaved"
by K. Dyregrov

After the Darkest Hour
by E. Mehren

**On Children and Death: How Children and
their Parents Can and Do Cope with Death**
by E. Kubler-Ross

Caring for each other in the community

If you would like additional suggestions,
would like to simply chat,
or need assistance finding additional
resources in the larger community,
please feel free to call or email.



Morse & Son Funeral Home
5917 Main Street
Niagara Falls, ON L2G 5Z7
Phone (905) 356-3550
Facsimile (905) 356-9916
www.morseandson.com

Morgan Funeral Home
415 Regent Street
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
Phone (905) 468-3255
Facsimile (905) 356-9916
www.morganfuneral.com

When we experience the death of a person who has died by suicide, we wrestle with numerous physical, emotional and spiritual concerns as we might with any sudden loss.

Interacting with health or emergency response professionals, hearing questions and comments from family, friends and other community members add to the complexity of emotions.

At a time when you are struggling to understand, accept and find peace within yourselves, it can seem overwhelming to try to answer the questions of others who are also grieving in their own unique way.

It is no wonder that you might find yourself feeling exhausted, uncertain or overwhelmed at times. Grieving after a suicide is one of life's hardest works.

Inside this brochure there are resources that may be of some help and comfort to you during this most difficult time.

"The metaphor of a stone thrown into a lake reflects well the wide-reaching impact of suicide. It causes many ripples which turbulently affect the water's surface."¹

¹ Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2012, 9

² <https://save.org/grief-support>



Grief After Suicide

All people who knew your loved one in life, will also be impacted by their death, but not all will grieve in the same way. There is no right or wrong way to feel or to respond to such news.

Common reactions to any sudden death may include sorrow and a yearning to be reunited; emotions can vary from a sense of shock and disbelief to relief, shame, anger, guilt or isolation. For some people the pain felt goes far beyond what any words could possibly describe.

When death has resulted from suicide, there may be the added trauma of finding the deceased or attempting resuscitation, interacting with police, fire or medical professionals, coroners and/or child protective services. There may be many questions.

It is important to remember that there are countless physical, social, mental and spiritual factors that can contribute to a death by suicide. Even though we may search for answers, the reality is that there may be many questions that will be left unanswered.

Speaking with other Adults

You may find it quite challenging to speak to others about how your loved one died.

It can be helpful to have a one line response prepared, whether for the visitation, funeral or for times when you simply run into someone on the street.

For example. *He died by suicide and I'm not quite ready to talk about it.* Or. *She struggled*

for a long time and died by suicide.

This allows you to control the flow of information and to share only as you are ready and feel able to do so.

It is really important to talk with people who are supportive and caring. Spend time with those who are able to listen without judgement and let you speak freely.

It may be helpful to ask another person to make necessary calls to the deceased's employer, school, friends, etc. to notify them.

Speaking with Children and Youths

It is important to tell the truth. As hard as it may be to speak the words, they need to hear it. Especially in this age of social media, it is far better to hear the truth from a trusted adult than to discover it from an outside source.

You do not need to share all of the details surrounding the death. Keep your statements short and simple and respond to any questions in an age appropriate way.

It's okay to say that you don't have all of the answers, that you don't understand. It's okay to let them see your anger, your hurt, your confusion. This lets them know that it's okay for them to be experiencing a wide variety of thoughts and feelings.

Reassure them that they are loved, and will be cared for always. They need to hear this spoken aloud.

Avoid shifting responsibilities of the deceased onto a child or youth as much as possible. For example, asking a young boy to become the "man of the house" places a huge burden onto the shoulders of a child who is already grieving.

A return to school, sports, etc. can help children to adjust and cope better in some, but not all, circumstances. Be sure to inform teachers and coaches of what has happened. They may be a valuable helping resource for your child.



Give Yourself Permission to Grieve

There is no right or wrong way to feel. What you are experiencing is unique to you based on the relationship you shared with the one who has died.

Returning to work, to school, to a faith community, to social activities, any number of daily activities may stir in you unexpected feelings. This is normal.

In time, your body, mind and soul will slowly learn how to adapt to a new state of being. It takes time and energy. Grieving is hard work.

Accept the help that people offer

Transportation, meal preparation, child or pet care, household chores, returning phone calls... this is how many people show that they care about you. Be gentle with yourself and remember that you are not alone.