

# Suicide and Bereavement

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON SUICIDE



### Background

Grief is a natural reaction to a loss of a loved person. Although there are some similarities in grief reactions across modes of death, the quality of the grief process after suicide is often specific.

People bereaved by suicide are referred to as suicide survivors, as they are the ones overcoming the impact of such loss. They are often struggling with questions, such as “why” the person has died by suicide and they are ruminating about potentially missed possibilities of recognising signs and preventing the suicide. They are often faced with a complex mix of feelings of pain, sadness, guilt, anger, regret, and other intensive negative emotions. They have also increased risks of mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression, and increased risk of suicidal behaviour.

Unfortunately, suicide survivors often feel misunderstood and lonely, and they find it hard to find support in their grief, which is, at least in part, related to the stigma and shame around the topic of suicide.

### How to support people bereaved by suicide



Listen and try to understand the bereaved person's reactions from their point of view.



Offer support in everyday activities, even regarding the basic needs.



Accept their grief reactions, even if these may change from one day to another.



Acknowledge that they are dealing with a complex process, rather than providing simplistic advice on how to change their feelings.



Here and there, gently initiate the conversation about the deceased person, if the bereaved person is having difficulties in doing that.



Be persistent and active in how you show your support even if the bereaved person withdraws a bit.

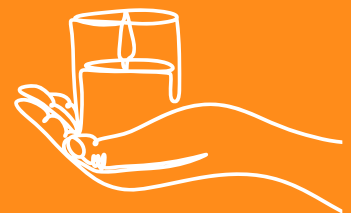


Try to do something pleasant for yourself and with the bereaved person.

### Key Points



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is a time when we reach out to each other around the world creating a warm and supportive global embrace. We are not alone, we are together and we will always remember and mourn our loved ones lost to suicide.



On 10 September each year, IASP invites everyone around the world to light a candle to show support for suicide prevention efforts, to reflect, to remember those lost to suicide and acknowledge survivors of suicide loss.

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### Take action if you are bereaved by suicide

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- ▶ Make small gestures of taking care of yourself everyday.
- ▶ Engage in meaningful rituals (such as lighting a candle) to remember your loved one.
- ▶ Share your feelings with people you trust. If you feel there is no one, try writing your thoughts down.
- ▶ Find local (suicide related) bereavement support groups. There are online groups too that operate on a global level.
- ▶ Do meaningful things that temporarily distract you from your ruminations.
- ▶ Try to engage in something pleasant or start a new activity to change habits.



### Resources

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An online search for 'suicide bereavement', or 'postvention services' will provide further resources

[Australia](#) - [StandBy Support After Suicide](#)

[Belgium](#) - [Working Group Further after Suicide](#)

[Canada](#) - [Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention](#)

[Denmark](#) - [Landsforeningen for efterladte efter selvmord](#)

[Finland](#) - [Surunauha](#)

[Germany](#) - [AGUS – Angehörige um Suizid](#)

[Hong Kong](#) - [Samaritans](#)

[Italy](#) - [De Leo Fund](#)

[Norway](#) - [Leve](#)

[UK](#) - [SOBS](#)

[Singapore](#) - [Samaritans of Singapore](#)

[Sweden](#) - [SPES](#)

[USA](#) - [Alliance of Hope](#)

