Recommended Reading

Good Grief Rituals; Elaine Childs-Gowell; 1992, Station Hill Press; ISBN 0882681184


Stronger Than Death: When Suicide Touches Your Life (A Mother’s Story); Sue Chance, MD; 1997, Replica Books; ISBN 0735100195


Silent Grief; Living in the Wake of Suicide; Christopher Lukas & Henry M. Seidin; 1997, Jason Aronson Inc.; ISBN 0765700565

Touched by Suicide: Hope and Healing After Loss; Michael F. Myers & Carla Fine; 2006, Penguin; ISBN 1592402283

Do They Have Bad Days in Heaven? Surviving the Suicide Loss of a Sibling; Michelle Linn-Gust; 2002, Chellehead Works; ISBN 0972331808


Resources

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention: www.suicideprevention.ca

Centre for Suicide Prevention: www.suicideinfo.ca

Befrienders International (Suicide and Crisis Support for 40 countries in 12 languages): www.befrienders.org

Hope & Healing: A Practical Guide for Survivors of Suicide - focuses on the practical matters that survivors need to deal with after a suicide. www.carmha.ca/publications

BC Bereavement Helpline: 1-877-779-2223

American Association of Suicidology: www.suicidology.org

S.A.F.E.R.

Suicide Attempt Follow-up, Education & Research

715 West 12th Avenue
Health Centre, Ground Floor
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9
604-875-4794

For more copies, go online at http://vch.eduhealth.ca or email phem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. GV.150.5948

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The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.

www.vch.ca
I Can’t be the Only One
This has Happened To

You are not. Many people know someone who died by suicide. In Canada more than 4,000 people die by suicide each year. The people left behind, survivors of a suicide loss, often have the same deep pain and confusion that you are feeling now.

I Don’t Like How I Feel

You may feel sad, angry, guilty or even relieved. You may feel angry with the person who died, with others, or with yourself. All of these feelings are normal after you lose someone to suicide. Talk about these feelings with someone you trust before you act on them.

I Feel Guilty. Could I Have Done More to Help?

When someone you love dies by suicide, you will probably go over and over in your mind what was happening for the person before they died.

You may blame yourself for things you did or said or for things you did not do. Feeling guilty is normal after a loss by suicide, but that doesn’t mean you are guilty.

You cannot always know that someone will attempt suicide. Sadly, not every suicide death can be prevented.

Grief After a Suicide

Grief takes time – longer than most people think. How you think and how you feel will change as time passes. You will learn to live with the loss.

Often, grief begins with shock. It is hard to believe that the person is not here. It is normal to feel numb as you deal with the funeral and the sudden changes in your everyday life.

As the shock fades you may begin to have strong feelings such as sadness, anger, guilt, blame or relief. You may dwell on talks you had with the person who died, and you may learn new facts about them from others. You may ask questions such as “Why?” over and over again. These questions do not have easy answers. This is the time to talk about your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust.

Each person’s grief is different. One person may feel sad most of the time and another person may feel angry. Most people have many different feelings that come and go. You may have difficult days, or difficult weeks. You may also have good days and good weeks. The length of time grief takes is different for each person, even in the same family. Be patient with yourself, and each other, and take the time you need.

You will learn to live without the person who died. You will miss them more deeply at some times than others. Over time, grief will take less of your energy. You will find it easier to do the things you used to do. As time passes most people are able to find new meaning in their lives.

Friends and Family

Family members may sometimes be able to help each other. At other times their own grief may get in the way. Friends may want to help but not know how. Tell them what you need.

Call for Support

You may want the support of a counsellor. At S.A.F.E.R. you can talk privately with a counsellor about your loss and may have a chance to join a group with other survivors.

Remember, there is hope... and help. Contact S.A.F.E.R at 604-875-4794 for suicide grief support.

S.A.F.E.R.’s Bereavement Program

S.A.F.E.R offers one-to-one grief counselling for people who have lost a family member or other loved one, friend, or co-worker. In addition, a counsellor led group may be available for those ready to work on their grief with others.

Our service is free of charge.

S.A.F.E.R. also offers training and education about suicide and loss by suicide. For more information, please call 604-875-4794.

Sharing of Information

Your right to privacy is important. We must protect confidentiality while balancing the need to share information in order to give you the best health care possible. If you have concerns, please talk to your counsellor.