

Support Sources:

Survivors of Suicide, Inc. (SOS)

Monthly adult suicide loss support groups Philadelphia and suburbs

215-545-2242 (Voice Mail)

www.sosphilly.org

Healthy Minds (Phila. DBHIDS)

Monthly adult suicide loss support groups in Philadelphia County.

215-685-6440 (24/7)

<https://healthymindsphilly.org/>

NAMI Bucks County PA

Bi-monthly adult suicide loss support group

215-343-3055

<https://namibuckspa.org/>

Center for Grief and Bereavement

Support for Suicide Loss Group

610-222-4110

<http://bereavementcenter.org/>

American Foundation for

Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

National Support Group Locator

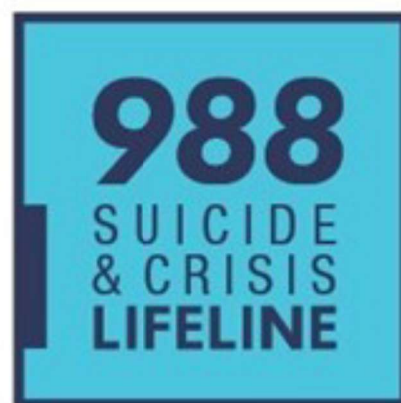
<https://afsp.org/find-a-support-group/>

Suicide Loss and Suicide Risk:

Exposure to suicide of someone that you are close to is a serious risk factor for suicide. This does not mean you will become suicidal but it does mean that you should be aware of this risk and possible signs. These may include:

- Onset or worsening of depression
- Isolating from normal social contacts
- Loss of interest in favored activities
- Sleep disturbances
- Increasing anxiety
- Agitation or anger
- Self-medicating with alcohol/drugs
- Thoughts/plans of suicide or self-harm

This information is not to take the place of advice from qualified healthcare sources.



Crisis Text Line –Text HOME to 741741



Understanding Suicide Loss



Montgomery County
Emergency Service
50 Beech Drive
Norristown, PA 19403
610-279-6100
www.mces.org
@MCES1

What is suicide loss?

Experiencing the suicide of a loved one or close friend is a severe emotional trauma. Suicides produce shock and disbelief; unanswerable questions about the deceased's intent; and often strong feelings of anger, betrayal, abandonment, shame, and guilt. The unanticipated nature of most suicides may lead to an obsessive search for the "why" by survivors (that may never be found).

What makes it different?

Losing someone to suicide is different from "normal" deaths such as to illness or old age and other sudden, unexpected deaths. The reasons for why other deaths, even violent ones, occurred may be painful but known. Suicide is the only death caused by the deceased. Suicide is surrounded by misconceptions and highly stigmatized. These features set it apart makes the grieving process more complex and difficult.

How long does it last?

The duration of suicide loss is largely set by the closeness of your relationship or if it was troubled at the time of the suicide. Some suicide loss survivors experience a relatively short-term bereavement, which passes within several weeks. Those with stronger ties to the deceased may experience a much longer, much more intense bereavement of one to three years or even longer. There is no set pattern. Grieving is a highly personal response.

What can make it worse?

Witnessing the suicide or finding the person can significantly increase stress and trauma. If you have a history of trauma, mental illness, or substance use you may experience recurrence of symptoms. Suicide loss may challenge recovery and sobriety. Being unable to grieve openly or being in settings or organizational cultures intolerant to grief may be hurtful and harmful.

What can help?

You may think that you are suffering a severe psychiatric crisis or even a "breakdown," but what you are enduring is an acute bereavement that associated with a traumatic loss. You are having a normal response to a suicide loss.

Getting support is important. The coping skills used with past losses may not work. Mutual self-help with others sharing a similar loss experiences may be beneficial. Suicide loss support groups may help as may readings or videos about suicide loss. In some cases, however, professional help may be necessary.

It will take time to come to terms with your loss. Most survivors will need to take things slowly, take care of themselves, their families, or their friends or co-workers. Do not set or accept deadlines for "getting over it" or "moving on." Suicide loss has no "quick fix."