

Support Resources

Survivors of Suicide, Inc.

Monthly adult suicide loss support groups
in Philadelphia and the surrounding areas
215-545-2242 (voicemail)
www.sosphilly.org

Healthy Minds

Through the Philadelphia DBHIDS Office
Monthly adult suicide loss support groups
in Philadelphia County.
215-685-6440 (24/7)
www.healthymindsphilly.org

NAMI Bucks County PA

Regularly scheduled adult suicide loss
support groups
215-343-3055
www.namibuckspa.org

Conshohocken Suicide Loss Survivors Group

Third Tuesday, Location Varies
610-306-3639

suicidepreventionconshy@gmail.com

Haddon Heights Cabin

Local Online Group, Tuesday 7-8pm
jeanette.simons@gmail.com

Center for Grief and Bereavement

Support for Suicide Loss Group
610-222-4110
bereavementcenter.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

National Support Group Locator
www.afsp.org

Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors

Online forum and support group locator for
those who have experienced a suicide loss.
www.allianceofhope.org

Suicide Loss and Suicide Risk

Exposure to the suicide of a loved one or someone you are close to is a **serious risk factor for suicide**. This does not mean that you will become suicidal, but it does mean that you should be aware of this risk and possible warning signs.

These warning signs may include:

- Onset or worsening of **depression** or depressive symptoms
- **Isolating** from social supports
- **Self-medicating** with alcohol or other substances
- Thoughts of suicide or self-harm

You are not alone.



This information is for educational purposes only. This information does not take the place of advice or help from qualified behavioral health or mental health professionals.



Understanding Suicide Loss



Montgomery County Emergency Service

50 Beech Drive
Norristown, PA 19403
610-279-6102
www.mces.org

What is **suicide loss**?

Experiencing the suicide of a loved one or someone you are close to is a severe emotional trauma. Suicides produce shock and disbelief, they bring about unanswerable questions about the deceased's intent, and are often accompanied by 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.

Why is suicide loss **different**?

Losing someone to suicide is very different from both "normal" deaths from illness or old age as well as to sudden, unexpected deaths.

The reasons for why other deaths, even violent ones, occurred may be painful but known. A suicide is the only death directly caused by the deceased. Suicide is surrounded by many misconceptions and is highly stigmatized; these characteristics set it apart from other deaths.

How long do the impacts of suicide loss last?

The length of time that you may be affected by suicide loss largely depends on how close you were to the person that you lost. Some suicide loss survivors experience a relatively short-term bereavement which passes within a few weeks. Those who feel stronger ties to the deceased may experience a much longer, much more intense bereavement that may last one year or even much longer. There is no standard pattern or timeline for grief. Grieving is a highly personal response.

What makes suicide loss **worse**?

- Witnessing the suicide or finding the person can significantly increase stress
- A history of trauma, mental illness, or substance use may produce recurrence of symptoms and challenge recovery and sobriety
- Being unable to grieve openly

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

What helps with **cop**ing from a suicide loss?

Understand that what you are feeling is normal. 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 is associated with a traumatic loss.

Seek out support. Whatever coping skills you have used with previous losses may be inadequate. Suicide loss is best endured with the help of others. Mutual self-help with others sharing the loss or with similar loss experiences can be beneficial. Most suicide loss survivors find support groups to be helpful. In some cases, however, professional help may be necessary.

Accept that you will need time to deal with your loss and grief. Most survivors will need to take things slowly, take care of themselves, their families, or their friends or coworkers. It is imperative to not set or accept deadlines for "getting over this." Suicide loss has no "quick fix."

