

GRIEF AFTER SUICIDE OR SUSPECTED SUICIDE

Remember there is no right or wrong way to react when someone you know dies. People will have many different reactions to what has happened.

- Know that you can survive, even if you feel that you can't.
- You may feel overwhelmed and frightened by your feelings. This is normal. You're not going crazy; you are grieving.
- You may not feel a strong reaction to what has happened. This is okay.
- You may experience feelings of guilt, confusion, forgetfulness and anger. Again, these feelings are all normal.
- You may feel angry at the person who has died, at yourself, at God, at everyone and everything. It is okay to express it without causing harm to yourself or others.
- You may feel guilty about what you did or did not do. Suicide is the act of an individual, for which we cannot take responsibility.
- You may never have an answer as to "why," but it is okay to keep asking "why" until you no longer need to ask or you are satisfied with partial answers.
- Sometimes people make decisions over which we have no control. It is not your choice.
- Feeling low is temporary; suicide is permanent. Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. If you are feeling low or having a difficult time, ask for help.
- Allow yourself to cry; this will help you to heal.
- Healing takes time. Allow yourself the time you need to grieve.
- Every person grieves differently and at a different pace.
- Delay making any big decisions if possible.
- This is the hardest thing you will ever do. Be patient with yourself.
- Spend time with people who are willing to listen when you need to talk and who also understand your need to be silent.
- Seek professional help if you feel overwhelmed.
- If you are thinking of trying to kill yourself, you must talk to a trusted adult.
- Avoid people who try to tell you what to feel and how to feel it and, in particular, those who think you should "be over it by now."
- Ask in school about a support group for survivors that provide a safe place for you to express your feelings, or simply a place to go to be with other survivors who are experiencing some of the same things you're going through.
- Allow yourself to laugh with others and at yourself. This is healing.
- Useful websites: www.spunoit.ie; www.youth.ie; www.reachout.com.au