RESOURCES TO HELP YOU HEAL

AFSP Documentaries
Each year AFSP produces a new documentary about the loss experience. The first film in the series is called *The Journey: A Story of Healing and Hope*. Watch all our documentaries at SurvivorDay.org.

Books and Films about Suicide Loss
Find recommended books and films about suicide, suicide prevention, and suicide loss.

Lifekeeper Memory Quilts
Our memory quilts—both physical and digital—allow suicide loss survivors to share stories of their loved ones through individual memorial squares.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR Suicide Prevention | afsp.org
THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

There are common realities you may have to address in the first few days after your loss.

For information on:

- Assisting the police
- Talking with people about what happened
- Talking with children
- Making preparations for a funeral or memorial service
- Understanding symptoms of trauma

Visit afsp.org/immediately-after-a-loss

HEALTHY HEALING

1. Be patient
   Know that everyone grieves at his or her own pace. Give yourself time.

2. Take care of yourself
   Eat nutritiously. Get sleep and exercise. Even a ten-minute walk can make a difference.

3. Seek professional help
   Many people find that counseling helps them deal with their grief in healthy ways.

4. Learn about suicide loss
   Knowing what to expect often helps you get through the more difficult times.

5. Connect with other suicide loss survivors
   Find comfort by reaching out to people who understand what you’re going through.
UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE LOSS

Everyone experiences suicide loss in their own way. In addition to common grief responses such as sadness and shock, you may also feel anger, shame, disorientation, relief, and guilt.

Allow yourself to feel what you feel and understand that healing takes time. If you are struggling to cope or experiencing suicidal feelings, reach out to a mental health professional.

UNDERSTANDING THE WHY

Though research shows that most people who take their own life have a mental health condition at the time of their death, the reasons behind any suicide are complicated and answers may be hard to find. Loss survivors may think about how a loved one died (or even why they died), yet learning to reflect upon the time you had together may help you move forward in your healing journey.

Suicide Notes
Most people who die by suicide do not leave a note. If you found a note with distressing content, remember that it was written in a moment of crisis and pain, and that it does not reflect your loved one’s full life experience.

CONNECT

SURVIVOR OUTREACH program

Trained suicide loss survivors visit with you in person, by phone, through video chat, or via email to help guide you in the aftermath of a suicide.

Visit afsp.org/sop

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day
Survivor Day is the one day a year when people all over the world gather at local events to find comfort, gain insight, and share stories of healing and hope. Each event features an AFSP-produced documentary about suicide loss and may also include small group discussions and other programming.

Visit afsp.org/SurvivorDay

Suicide Loss Survivor Support Groups
Sharing your experiences with fellow loss survivors can help you heal. AFSP maintains an online directory of support groups so you can easily find groups in your community.

Visit afsp.org/SupportGroups
KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE

You don’t have to go through this difficult experience on your own. Suicide affects millions each year, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention offers resources to help loss survivors cope, connect, and heal.
Worried about Suicide? Learn the FACTS!

Are you concerned that someone you know may be at risk for suicide? Your first step in helping may be as simple as learning the FACTS or warning signs. The following signs may mean that a youth is at risk for suicide, particularly if that person attempted suicide in the past.

**FEELINGS**
- Expressing hopelessness about the future.

**ACTIONS**
- Displaying severe/overwhelming pain or distress.

**CHANGES**
- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, including: withdrawal from friends or changes in social activities; anger or hostility; or changes in sleep.

**THREATS**
- Talking about, writing about, or making plans for suicide.

**SITUATIONS**
- Experiencing stressful situations including those that involve loss, change, create personal humiliation, or involve getting into trouble at home, in school or with the law. These kinds of situations can serve as triggers for suicide.

If you notice any of these warning signs, you can help!

1. Express your concern about what you are observing in their behavior
2. Ask directly about suicide
3. Encourage them to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255)
4. Involve an adult they trust

Remember, if you have immediate concern about someone’s safety, call 911 right away!

Suicide is a preventable problem. By taking the time to notice and reach out to a peer, you can be the beginning of a positive solution.

Don't Forget -
Youth Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business!

*This is an updated version of the FACTS handout available in the Lifelines Curriculum and “Making Educators Partners”.*
Facts about Suicide in Adolescents

Suicide is complicated and involves the interplay of multiple risk factors. It is not simply the result of stress or difficult life circumstances. Many people who die by suicide have a mental health condition. In teens, the behavioral health conditions most closely linked to suicide risk are major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, eating disorders, and substance abuse problems. Although in some cases these conditions may be precipitated by environmental stressors, they can also occur as a result of changes in brain chemistry, even in the absence of an identifiable or obvious “trigger.”

Other key risk factors for suicide include the following:

- Personality characteristics, such as hopelessness, low self-esteem, impulsivity, risk-taking, and poor problem-solving or coping skills
- Family characteristics, such as family history of suicidal behavior or mental health problems, death of a close family member, and problems in the parent-child relationship
- Childhood abuse, neglect, or trauma
- Stressful life circumstances, such as physical, sexual, and/or psychological abuse; breaking up of a romantic relationship; school problems; bullying by peers; trouble with the law; and suicide of a peer
- Access to lethal means, especially in the home

It is important to remember that the vast majority of teens who experience even very stressful life events do not become suicidal. But in some cases, such experiences can be a catalyst for suicidal behavior in teens who are already struggling with depression or other mental health problems. In others, traumatic experiences (such as prolonged bullying) can precipitate depression, anxiety, abuse of alcohol or drugs, or another mental health condition, which can increase suicide risk. Conversely, existing mental health conditions may also lead to stressful life experiences, which may then exacerbate the underlying illness and in turn increase suicide risk.

Help Is Available

If there are concerns about a student’s emotional or mental health, a referral should be made to an appropriate mental health professional for assessment, diagnosis, and possible treatment. Mental health resources that may be available include the following:

- School-based mental health professionals
- Community mental health providers and clinics
- Emergency psychiatric screening centers
- Children’s mobile response programs

Pediatricians and primary care providers can also be a source of mental health referrals. Many of them are also well-versed in recognizing and treating certain mental health conditions like depression.

Information and referrals regarding treatment for mental and substance use disorders are available at SAMHSA’s National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357). This is a free, confidential service open 24/7.
Crisis Lines
A crisis line is a service that provides free, confidential support and resources for people in emotional distress. The service is provided by a trained crisis counselor on the phone and in some cases by text and/or chat. You can call or text for help with someone you're worried about or for yourself. In addition to the resources listed below, some states have their own crisis lines with phone, text, and/or chat services.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Call 800-273-TALK (8255)
Chat service and other information: Go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Crisis Text Line
Text HOME to 741741
Other information: Go to www.crisistextline.org

Trevor Project
Provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13–24
Trevor Lifeline: Call 1-866-488-7386
TrevorText: Text TREVOR to 1-202-304-1200
TrevorChat and other information and resources: Go to www.trevorproject.org