

SOS Groups:

Lower Bucks County, PA:

Aria Health/Bucks County Campus
Development Office, Ground Floor
380 N. Oxford Valley Rd, Langhorne, PA
4th Tuesday 7:30Pm

Central Bucks County, PA:

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
2131 Palomino Drive, Warrington, PA
2nd Tuesday 7:30 PM

Chester County, PA:

Paoli Memorial Hospital
Paoli Medical Building, Willistown Room
Route 30, Paoli, PA
2nd Wednesday 7:30 PM

Delaware County, PA:

Crozer Chester Medical Center
15th Street & Upland Avenue, Upland, PA
3rd Tuesday 7:30 PM

Philadelphia County, PA:

3535 Market St., Phila., PA - Rm 2037
1st Tuesday 7:30PM

Montgomery County, PA:

Bryn Mawr Hospital, Clothier Auditorium
Bryn Mawr Ave & County Line Rd
Bryn Mawr, PA
1st Wednesday 7:30 PM

Philadelphia County, PA:

Aria Health, Torresdale Campus
Conference Room #4
Knights & Red Lion Rds., Phila., PA
2nd Tuesday 7:30 PM

Camden County, NJ

Barrington Municipal Building
229 Trenton Ave., Barrington NJ
2nd Tuesday 7:00 pm

It is also hard to believe that someone that you care for dearly, someone that you would do anything for, may be suicidal.

Why didn't my loved one tell me?

Some may not want to burden others with their problems. Some feel shame at being suicidal.

Psychological pain is not conducive to communications. It sets its sufferers apart from those around them. Severe pain is alienating. It takes away the sense that anything can be done about it. Being suicidal is a tremendous burden.

Most suicidal individuals do not really want to die. They just want to end their pain. Many who complete suicide struggle with this ambivalence to the end.

Why didn't somebody do something?

Suicide is not predictable. It can be determined that someone may be at risk of suicide. However, there is no way to predict if or when an individual may complete suicide.

Does suicide loss follow any pattern?

We all seem to face a period after the loss when nothing fits. It is like a "personal 9/11" because of the devastation, anguish, panic, and emotion that sweep over you.

It is followed by feeling that you are breaking down emotionally. Pain, stress and depression bring this about. You may feel powerless.

These phases may last some months. Gradually you rebound. You have more energy. Interests may come back. You are moving in the right direction.

The last step is when you arrive at a new sense of who you are as a result of your loss. Your beliefs and values are affected by what you have experienced. You can function better and, except for a residual sense of loss, you feel normal again.

What is a self-help support group?

Support is critical to recovery from suicide loss and groups are an effective way to receive it. A support group enhances self-esteem and coping ability. Information sharing is a key element. Support groups are "safe places" with others who understand your loss and feelings.

At group meetings, participants introduce themselves, say what they are comfortable in saying about their loss, and share thoughts on grieving.

What will I need later?

You must be ready to deal with "triggers." These are events or things that may rekindle your grief. The most common are anniversaries of your loss., the first holidays after the loss and the holidays thereafter. Sometimes events like graduations or weddings may also be triggers.

The best way to handle these occasions is to not go it alone. Stay close to those you trust. Avoid the "empty chair syndrome" by going out for dinner rather than eating at home or at a relative's, if that was your custom on holidays.

Proceed at your own pace. Don't set impractical goals or let others impose unrealistic expectations for you (e.g., "Shouldn't you be over this by now?").

Coping after a Suicide Loss

Answers for those who have lost someone to suicide



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About SOS:

SOS is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization. It started in the Philadelphia, PA area in 1983. SOS believes that sharing experiences and feelings with is the best form of help. Our mission is to offer support to individuals and families who have lost someone to suicide.

How to Help:

SOS welcomes tax deductible donations and memorial gifts in any amount. You may designate SOS for your United Way contribution. Our number is 09449.

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Morton, PA***

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***Written in memory of PAS
1968-1996***

How do I get started?

In the first weeks, you need to see that what you feel is normal; to get support; to learn more about suicide; and to gain insight into your loss.

You may ask: How can what I feel be “normal”? It is what happened to the one that you lost that is abnormal. Your emotional response is normal.

Support may not be something you’ve needed with past losses. You felt the loss but you recovered quickly. Suicide loss is very different.

Suicide is not something that most of us knew anything about before our loss. We need to know what suicide is begin to relate to our loss. We need knowledge to fend off ignorance about suicide that we may find hurtful.

Why do I feel are out of control?

You may feel betrayed, angry, and disoriented. You may feel that the one you lost let you down. You may be angry that that he or she never gave you the chance to help. You may feel that you should have done something to prevent this.

This is what happens after a suicide. No one is ever ready for it.

Why did this happen?

Every suicide is different, but studies suggest that it comes about because of intense psychological pain and hopelessness.

Psychological pain arises when there is some seemingly irresolvable and frustrating situation. It may be a compelling personal, interpersonal, financial problem, or something else

Whatever the problem, it is devastating. Coping skills do not work and self-esteem and sense of control diminish significantly. This brings about hopelessness. Sometimes those enduring it believe that it can only be solved by death. This is when a suicide may happen.

Why didn't I know?

It is difficult to determine when someone is at very high risk of suicide, and most people just don't know the warning signs of suicide. Also not all suicidal individuals show signs of risk.

Many of those who are suicidal may make some effort to hide it. Others may have feared seeming weak if they asked for help.