

Beyond Surviving

1. Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with why it happened until you no longer need to know why, or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings but all our feelings are normal.
4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy, - you are in mourning.
5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself.
6. You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on those thoughts.
8. Remember to take one day at a time.
9. Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone.
10. Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
11. Give yourself time to heal.
12. Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
13. Expect setbacks. Don't panic if emotions return like a tidal wave. You may only be experiencing a remnant of grief.
14. Try to put off major decisions.
15. Give yourself permission to get professional help.
16. Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
17. Be patient with yourself and with others.
18. Set your own limits and learn to say no.
19. Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
20. Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as The Compassionate Friends or Survivors of Suicide Groups. If not, ask a professional to help start one.
21. Call on your personal faith to help you through.
22. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, i.e. – headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, etc.
23. The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
24. Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go.
25. Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and go beyond just surviving. . . .

From My Son...My Son...A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss, or Suicide

By Iris Bolton

(Bolton Press, 1325 Belmore Way NE, Atlanta, GA 30350)

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THE PHASES OF GRIEF

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. All your feelings are normal. It is helpful, however, to know that human grief is a process that often follows a healing pattern.

Shock is the first stage. It is accompanied by disbelief and numbness.

Denial follows quickly, crying, "I don't believe it," or "It can't be."

Bargaining is your promise that "I'll be so very good that maybe I can wake up and find that it isn't so. I'll do all the right things if only...."

Guilt is painful and hard to deal with. This is when one says over and over, "If only I had..." or "If only I had not..." This is a normal feeling and ultimately it may be solved by stating, "I'm a human being and I gave the best and worst of me to my friend (child, husband, etc...) and what he or she does with that is his or her responsibility.

Anger is another big factor which seems to be necessary in order to face the reality of life and then to get beyond it. We must all heal in our own ways. Anger is a natural stage through which we must pass. Your anger at your deceased loved one may even make you feel guilty, or it may be because your own life continues whereas your friend's life is over.

Depression is a stage of grief that comes and goes. Knowing this, be prepared to give yourself time to heal. Resignation is a late stage. It comes when finally you accept the truth.

Acceptance and hope! Understand that you will never be the same but your life can go on to find meaning and purpose.

WHAT TO DO

Share your feelings with someone.
Discuss those feelings openly and frankly.
Show interest and support to those who need your help.
Get professional assistance!

SUICIDE IS A PERMANENT SOLUTION TO A TEMPORARY PROBLEM

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