

Dear Friend:

I write to extend sincere condolences to you on your loss of a loved one to suicide. The death of someone close brings sorrow - but a death from suicide is especially anguishing and traumatic. The unexpected loss of a family member or friend can throw a person's world into chaos and bring up feelings not typically experienced with other deaths.

As hard as it is, please know that you are not alone. Family members and friends who have lost someone dear to suicide are called suicide survivors. It is estimated that over 4.5 million people became survivors of suicide in the last 25 years in the United States. Some survivors have shared their journey of grief and healing so that newly bereaved families and friends of suicide victims would have resources that were not available when they experienced their loss. The Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program (MYSPP) has assembled a kit containing resource information for family members and others who have experienced the loss of a loved one by suicide.

In the kit you will find:

- A list of books written by those who have lost a child, partner, sibling, or close friend to suicide
- Web sites that have helpful information on the grief process for those left behind after a suicide, including e-mail support groups, memorials, etc.
- A list of grief support centers in Maine with contact information and types of services provided
- A pamphlet entitled SOS: A Handbook for Survivors of Suicide
- Original work by survivors in Maine
- The Tasks of Grief and Beyond Surviving

Knowing that everyone grieves differently, I hope that you will look at these materials when you feel ready, and find some support. It may help to share this information with others. Take the time you need, don't be afraid or shy to ask for help and understanding - be gentle with yourself as you grieve.

Sincerely,



Cheryl DiCara, Coordinator, Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program,
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Department of Health and Human Services



John E. Baldacci, Governor

Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner

The Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program is a program of the Governor's Children's Cabinet coordinated by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. For information and resources, contact the Information Resource Center at 1-800-499-0027 or www.mainesuicideprevention.org