



Have you lost someone you love to

# SUICIDE?

**If** so, you have been thrown into a dark place that you have never imagined could exist. Suddenly, life has become chaotic, lonely and immensely painful. You struggle to find courage to say goodbye to a loved one who has chosen a heart-breaking end to life. Words are inadequate to describe your feelings. The weight of your loss feels overwhelming to the point that you think you won't find your next breath.

Mourning a death by suicide is a more intense and confusing process than mourning a death from natural causes. But there is hope. With hard work and support you can eventually work through your grief to find understanding.



### The numbers are staggering.

**M**ore than 90 percent of those who die by suicide have a mental illness. Individuals who suffer from alcoholism or drug dependency and addiction are at even greater risk. Feelings of hopelessness can also push people toward thoughts of suicide.

### Falling into the abyss of grief.

**G**rief is a nebulous period of intense upheaval. Initially you may experience a numbing sense of shock and denial. This is your instinctive way of protecting yourself until you can handle more pain. Aching sadness and despair may fill your days, along with anger, guilt, shame, anxiety and confusion.

It is common to tumble into periods of depression, loneliness and isolation. You may feel forgetful, overwhelmed, even physically and mentally incapacitated. You might experience physical pain and even illness. Finding that you no longer enjoy former interests is also common. You may become enraged with your loved one for thrusting you into such a painful situation, or feel intense anger at him or her for imposing on you the social stigma you perceive is attached to suicide. These responses are normal. They are road signs along the path to eventual healing – a healing that comes slowly as you recognize, embrace, and work through your emotions.

This path is not linear, it is filled with painful hurdles, set-backs and detours. If you ignore the



opportunity to experience the depths of your grief and find your much-needed support, your emotional wounds may not heal. The incidence of severe depression, symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicide are higher among those facing this difficult loss.

### You are a suicide survivor.

**A** survivor of suicide is a family member or friend of someone who died by suicide. Reaching out to other suicide survivors provides tremendous help. You can express yourself safely in an atmosphere of empathy and support, finding strength among peers who know firsthand what you are going through.

You can't reclaim the life you lived before this loss, but as a survivor you can discover a new version of normal – one that honors your loss and allows you to move on in healthy and productive ways. NAMI can help you achieve this.

### You are not alone.

**NAMI**, (the National Alliance for Mental Illness), offers an array of peer education and training programs, as well as initiatives and services for individuals, family members, health care providers and the general public. NAMI's education and support programs provide relevant information, valuable insight and the opportunity to engage in support networks.

- Mentoring: talking with someone who has "been there."
- Support groups
- Education groups
- Online support
- Advocacy
- Educational opportunities to raise awareness

### Your grief is safe with us.

**W**e are suicide survivors. We are your peers. We share your pain of loss and hope for understanding. Let us help.



SUICIDE SURVIVORS ADVISORY GROUP



**(801) 323-9900**

Toll free: 1(877) 230-6264  
450 South 900 East #160  
Salt Lake City, UT 84102

[www.namiut.org](http://www.namiut.org)

Help Hope Healing

*"To live in the hearts we leave behind is to never die."* – Carl Sagan