



National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line  
1-800-950-6264 <https://www.nami.org/help>  
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.TALK  
Translifeline 877.565.8860  
Veteran's Crisis Line 800.273.8255 *press 1*  
Pastoral Care—Pastor Jim Alexander 623.792.5295  
<https://thepalms.org/Tools2Thrive>

This weekend, we observe International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. The Church of the Palms has offered two, Tuesday morning learning and support opportunities to help us better understand how to effectively journey with people who have been affected by suicide in some way. The information within this article may assist you in helping someone you know or may come into contact with who is a survivor of suicide loss. We pray that this is useful to you should you ever need it.

## Survivors of Suicide

### Grief After Suicide

Know that you can survive. Though you may feel you cannot survive, you can. The intense feelings of grief can be overwhelming and frightening. This is normal. You are not going crazy; you are grieving.

### People Grieve Differently

The path of grief is one of twists and turns and you may often feel you are getting nowhere. Remember that even setbacks are a kind of progress. Expect setback and occasional painful reminders. Some days are better than others, and if you go about life with this mentality, you will be better prepared through the grieving process. This is the hardest thing you will ever do. Be patient with yourself.

### Seek Out People Who Are Willing To Listen

Find people you trust who are willing to listen and who are willing to be a silent presence for you. Give yourself permission to seek professional help. Avoid people who try to tell you what to feel and how to feel it, in particular, those who think you should "be over it by now." Find a support group for survivors that provide a safe place for you to express your feelings or simply a place to go to be with other survivors who are experiencing some of the same things you are going through. You may also find this link helpful as you search for support groups.  
<https://save.org/>

### Loss Survivors and PTSD

Personal PTSD potential after learning of a loved one or friend's suicide is normal. PTSD range of symptoms are the same for any type of tragedy, shock, or sudden loss. The major added emotional issue is COMPLEX GRIEF. It is often noted by professionals and survivors that this is the hardest and most complicated grief one can experience. Seek someone to talk to about symptoms and reactions that may be occurring.



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## How To Take Care Of Yourself As a Loss Survivor

The aftermath of a loved one's suicide can be full of confusing and painful emotions. The Lifeline (800-273-TALK) is always available to help provide support. The WISE Team members can offer support, along with the pastors of The Church of the Palms. Don't feel pressured to talk right away or to discuss your loss. Do what feels right for you. When you are ready to talk, that will indicate to your friends and family that they can support you in appropriate ways. You may also find it helpful to write about your feelings. You may even decide to write a letter to your lost loved one. This can be a safe place for you to express some of the things you were not able to say before their death.

## How To Help a Loss Survivor

Provide support to someone who has lost a loved one to suicide can be overwhelming. Accept their feelings and remember that they are grappling with complex feeling after the death of a loved one by suicide, such as fear, grief, shame, and anger. Be compassionate and patient. Provide support with empathy and without judgement. Be empathetic by checking in on them during holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, or other milestones. These are the times when the loss survivor is perhaps feeling the most vulnerable. Don't avoid talking to them about the person who died by suicide. Use the name of the person in your conversations, placing an emphasis on the importance of the person. This can make it easier to discuss a subject that is often stigmatized. If you see any [warning signs](#) that the survivor may require professional help, try to facilitate that connection.

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### Care Team Members

Bobbie Chapman, Doris Gott, Eric Holmes, Jan Alexander, Carolyn Modeen, John and Pat Durbin, Kay Klinkenborg, Judy Jondahl, Lurene Ladd, Randolph Omahana, Scott Patrick, Suzanne Boisclair, Steve Meoli, Laurie Cathey, David Klingensmith, Vickie Ashenbrenner, Diana Shalzi, Pastor Paul, Pastor Jim.

\*\*\* People can also pick up a Care Team Trifold, which has Care Team member names and other helpful information about what the Care Team does, in the Narthex.

### WISE Steering Committee

Andrea Stefanov, Judy Jondahl, Karen Lapointe, Kay Klinkenborg, Nancy Nonini, Phil Ladd, Pastor Paul, Pastor Jim.