

## Suicide Loss Survivors Support Resources

Losing a loved one to suicide is difficult and can come with complicated emotions. This journey can be challenging, but you don't have to face it alone. There are a variety of different supports available to help cope with the loss of a loved one to suicide, included below are a variety of different resources that may be helpful for you on your path to healing.

### 988

[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline \(988lifeline.org\)](https://988lifeline.org) provides free and confidential support 24/7 to individuals in emotional distress or experiencing suicidal thoughts. By connecting with 988, you can connect with trained counselors who can provide support, guidance, and resources to help you through difficult times.

### Healing Conversations

Healing Conversations is a program through the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention that offers a one-time visit (phone, virtual, in-person) that connects those who have lost a loved one to suicide with trained volunteers who are also survivors of suicide loss. The goal of this connection is to help recent survivors navigate this challenging journey by offering support, connection, and resources. [Healing Conversations \(https://afsp.org/healing-conversations/\)](https://afsp.org/healing-conversations/)

### Bereavement support groups

When you have lost someone to suicide, it is not unusual to withdraw from others. Bereavement groups, ideally a group focused on suicide loss, can be helpful. These groups can offer a community that has gone through a similar loss and provide a space for hope and healing.

Tips in choosing a support group:

- **Do research:** Check the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \(https://afsp.org/find-a-support-group/\)](https://afsp.org/find-a-support-group/) to locate a support group near you.
- **Choose one that is right for you:** there are options for in person or virtual online support groups and may have different focuses. Support groups are through organizations like faith communities, hospitals, or non-profit agencies and are often facilitated by those with lived experience. A support group is centered more on coping strategies and finding comfort from shared experiences where a therapy group focuses on bringing about change and personal growth through structured guidance and facilitated by a trained mental health professional. Consider what might feel the most beneficial to you.
- **Communicate with the facilitator:** if possible before attending group to better understand group dynamics and group rules/expectations.
- **See if it is a good fit:** try out the support group for a while and if it doesn't seem to feel right it is ok to try a different format or group.

- **Trust your instincts:** watch out for groups that promise a cure, charge high fees or pressure the purchase of products or services

## Mental health professional

Survivors commonly experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), intense emotions, conflicted feelings about the death, guilt, blame, social stigma, financial issues, and other unexpected challenges in relationships. A mental health professional can provide guidance and support that is tailored to your specific needs. There are many different types of mental health professionals such as therapists and counselors. Having someone to talk with who is trained in traumatic loss can be very helpful. Look for a grief / trauma counselor who has experience helping people bereaved by suicide.

Tips in choosing a mental health professional:

- **Determine what type of mental health professional you need:** There are a variety of different types of mental health professionals. It is a good idea to determine what type of mental health professional you may want to engage with. Visit here for information about the different types: [Mental Health America: Finding the Right Clinical Mental Health Care For You \(https://www.mhanational.org/finding-right-mental-health-care-you\)](https://www.mhanational.org/finding-right-mental-health-care-you)
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions:** Having someone to talk to who is trained in traumatic loss can be helpful. Don't be afraid to ask about their training and experience specific to suicide grief and loss.
- **Do research:**
  - Review the list of clinicians that have been trained in suicide bereavement through the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Bereavement Trained Clinicians \(https://afsp.org/suicide-bereavement-trained-clinicians/\)](https://afsp.org/suicide-bereavement-trained-clinicians/)
  - Confidential and anonymous resource for locating treatment facilities for mental and substance use disorder: [FindTreatment.gov \(https://findtreatment.gov/\)](https://findtreatment.gov/)
  - The decision to use herbs or medication is a personal one. There is no one "right way." You alone will know what feels right. If you are considering medication, consider seeking the help of a psychiatrist (rather than a general practitioner) and informing yourself about possible side effects.
- **Determine if it is a good fit:** As you are meeting with your mental health professional, reflect to ensure that it is the right fit for the support you are looking for.

Minnesota Department of Health Suicide Prevention Unit  
85 East 7th Pl, PO Box 64882  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0882  
health.suicideprev.mdh@state.mn.us  
www.health.state.mn.us

*To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5400.*

5-22-24