

How to cope and heal after a suicide

Suicide is emotionally devastating to family and friends who are impacted. Whether it is a co-worker, a family member, a friend, an acquaintance, or even someone you might not know very well, suicide can affect someone's emotional stress and can cause extreme sadness, shock, guilt and anger.

It is estimated that out of every suicide that occurs, an average of 6 people are directly impacted from that person's death.¹

Common responses to suicide

Some common responses to those coping with a loss of a loved one or friend may include:

- **Shock**—You may feel shocked and surprised about the suicide. It might be something you don't believe is real or could have happened
- **Anger**—You may feel angry or upset with the person who committed suicide and feel that you have been abandoned. You might also feel angry for not recognizing possible red flags or signs that could have been detected prior to the suicide.
- **Guilt**—You may feel guilty about the suicide and think about how you should have stopped the person from committing suicide.
- **Despair**—You might feel completely alone, sad, and helpless. You could become physically and emotionally sick and possibly consider suicide yourself.

1. *U.S.A Suicide Official Data*

Coping with a suicide

All of the emotions that survivors of suicide experience are completely normal. Healing from suicide takes time. Here are a few things to think about when trying to recover from the loss of a loved one or friend:

- **Keep in touch**—Be sure to stay in touch with loved ones and friends for comfort, understanding and healing. Surround yourself with people who are willing to listen and talk about what happened.
- **Take time to grieve**—Take a moment to do what is best for you. You might want more alone time or you may want to talk to friends and family. Whatever you need to process and cope with the loss is completely normal.
- **Recognize triggers**—Be prepared for painful reminders such as birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and other special occasions. Be aware that you might have to change traditions in order to heal from the loss. Recognize that something may cause increased emotion and think about how to react to it in advance.

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.