



Complicated grief after a suicide

Suicide is a very painful way to lose a loved one. Although it is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, most people don't understand suicide. When someone dies by suicide, survivors often feel uncomfortable talking about it. They may worry about how others will react and about how they will be seen by others. This can leave a suicide survivor feeling very alone.

A suicide death is a very difficult way to lose a loved one. Survivors often blame themselves even if they know it isn't rational. Sometimes they personalize the suicide and feel abandoned or rejected. Surviving loved ones can be plagued by unanswered questions about the death, worried about how they might have let their loved ones down, or focused on all the ways they could have prevented this from happening. They sometimes feel a sense of shame or guilt by association. They may think others see suicide as wrong and that they have done something wrong because they were close to the deceased person.

Focusing excessively on how or why a person died can complicate grief and prolong the healing process. People need to resolve these difficult questions in order to adapt to their loss. People with complicated grief who have lost someone to suicide have symptoms that are very similar to people with complicated grief after other losses. Complicated Grief Treatment offers a way to help. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (www.afsp.org) is an excellent resource.