

10 THINGS WE KNOW TO BE TRUE: SURVIVING SUICIDE LOSS

by TAPS Suicide Postvention Team



Whether in the early days following our loss or years later in our grief journeys, we gain so much from experiences shared by fellow survivors, knowledge learned from education, and insights and perspective from experts and guest speakers shared at TAPS events. We remember and internalize the advice and guidance that resonates with us, and what offers us hope to make it through each day. Many of these suggestions are time-tested truths we have come to believe in and refer back to for healing. Now we would like to share them with you.



You are not alone. Grief can feel very isolating, but you don't have to walk this journey alone. We've been down the road you're traveling, and we're here for you.



You will not always feel this much pain. As time passes, the hurt you feel now will change. We know from experience that your emotional pain will subside and soften with time. It won't always feel like it does right now.



Most people who die by suicide do not want to die. They want their pain to end. Whatever pain brought our loved ones to end their lives, it inhibited them from thinking clearly and from fully comprehending the heartbreak their suicides would cause.



It's not your fault. Suicide is rarely the result of just one person, conversation, or event. It usually involves multiple, complex factors that culminate in a "perfect storm."



You cannot prevent what you cannot predict. There was no way you could have known it would happen that very day, at that precise moment. You cannot control the thoughts and actions of others.



Eventually, the questions will cease to be so all encompassing. "Why?" "What if?" Most of us who have experienced suicide loss wrestle with these and other questions for a long time. This is normal. It helps us to learn enough "to suffice," to process our thoughts so that we can eventually find peace.



What you tell yourself matters. How you talk to yourself about what happened can shape the experience of your grief journey. Trust what you know about your loved one, and choose to tell yourself the story that best helps you heal.



Suicide is not a reflection of love. People who die by suicide may have believed they were a burden to the people they love. They thought that their families would be better off without them. Whereas we know this to be untrue, our loved ones could not see clearly through the fog of their emotional pain.



How you cope with this is up to you. You didn't choose for this to happen to you, but you do get to decide how to respond to it. You have a say in how you heal.



Love never ends. When your loved one died, the love you shared didn't just stop. Your relationship continues. Keep the positive memories alive in all that you do.

About the Team

The TAPS Suicide Prevention & Postvention Team is a division of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) that addresses the challenge of suicide in the military, the veteran community, and across the nation. This team of dedicated professionals draws from a powerful combination of clinical expertise, survivor "lived experience," and TAPS own best practices in peer-to-peer grief support to care for those who have lost loved ones to suicide and help others prevent more loss.

TAPS
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

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Call us 24/7 at
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