SUICIDE PREVENTION & POSTVENTION PROGRAM

Whether in the early days after loss or years later, we grow through shared experiences with other survivors and knowledge and perspectives gained from experts and facilitators 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'd like to share them with you.

WHY TAPS?

Since 1994, TAPS has supported the unique grief military and veteran families face in the wake of suicide loss. As fellow survivors, we have been through this pain and know how to help. Suicide grief is different, with complicating factors that can hinder the healing process. There are also issues unique to military culture that TAPS understands. You are not alone. Our network of surviving peers offers support, hope, and encouragement. Our customized programs, events, and services can support you through your grief.

WHAT IS POSTVENTION?

Suicide postvention is the strategy of support TAPS offers to survivors in the aftermath of a military-related suicide. Our approach is grounded in the philosophy and historical work of leading suicidologist and TAPS associate Dr. Frank Campbell, a pioneer in the field of postvention, whose expertise spans more than three decades. Dr. Campbell's body of work on suicide grief and trauma is governed by the idea that "postvention is prevention." Based on this, TAPS has developed a three-phase Suicide Postvention Model of Support that offers a range of immediate services that will help set you and your family members on a stable and hopeful path to healing, guide you through a healthy journey of grieving, and ultimately help you establish a new life after loss — a concept we call "post-traumatic growth."

HELPFUL INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW NOW

1. Your life has changed forever. You're left to deal with the unimaginable. You might sense a loss of control, trust, and safety. This is a lot to handle alone, and we are here to help you through it.

2. Suicide grief is different. There are issues related to suicide loss that can complicate the grieving process, like trauma, changes in support systems, trying to understand why this happened, and struggling with how to talk about the death. This is an important time to focus on your own well-being and care, as well as that of those around you.

3. Grief can be a confusing and complex process. There are ups and downs, good days and bad, when you will likely experience overwhelming feelings. Most of us feel unprepared for how to cope with such loss. Processing our grief often requires patience, hard work, and guidance. TAPS provides the tools and resources needed to help you navigate this journey.

4. Grief and trauma are two different things. While grief is a natural reaction to loss, the traumatic exposure often associated with suicide can be one of the biggest barriers to moving forward in the process of grieving a suicide loss. Trauma can and should be treated separately from grief. We can help you deal with both.

5. Your emotions are valid. Everyone responds to loss differently. Seeking personal and professional support is a critical component of the healing process so that you can process and express your emotions in healthy ways that work for you.

6. Open communication is paramount when discussing suicide. For example, children process suicide loss differently than adults. When talking with children about suicide, it's important to establish a foundation of safety and trust. Honest dialogue can reduce risk and save lives. Our staff has personal experience and specialized training to aid you in this delicate process.

"TAPS was there through my grief journey to offer hope on my path to healing." — TAPS Suicide Loss Survivor

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

TAPS offers a range of programming and resources to care for you in your time of need.

- **TAPS National Military Survivor Helpline** — 24/7 support at 800-959-TAPS (8277)
- **Survivor Care Team** — Outreach and engagement by TAPS staff, many of whom are survivors of suicide loss
- **National Peer-Support Network** — Trained volunteers providing peer-based support
- **Casework** — Assistance navigating benefits, burials, records, financial and legal issues, and other needs
- **Online Community** — Message boards, blogs, and chats moderated by TAPS staff
- **TAPS Magazine** — Quarterly publication including peer and expert grief and healing articles
- **Counseling Referrals** — Connections to a network of grief and trauma specialists for adults and children
- **Resource Kits** — Customized care packages with suicide-specific literature and other materials
- **Community Resources** — Customized list of local support groups, grief centers, children's resources, etc.

ADDITIONAL OFFERINGS & IMPACT

- Access to national partner organizations
- Training and webinars
- Consultations with organizations in the military, public, and private sectors
- Board representation on task forces, committees, and other advocacy platforms
- Leader in national policy discussions and legislation around suicide
- Subject matter expertise, public messaging, and contributions to the field of suicidology
- Development of best-practice TAPS Suicide Postvention Model®

If you need grief support for your military-related loss, call our National Military Survivor Helpline, 24/7 at 800-959-(TAPS) 8277. If you or someone you know is in crisis, please seek immediate help by calling the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 (Veterans, press 1), texting the National Crisis Text Line at 741741, or going to the nearest emergency room. TAPS Suicide Prevention & Postvention is a department of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors.
To learn more, visit us at taps.org/suicide.

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