TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

10 THINGS WE KNOW TO BE TRUE: SURVIVING SUICIDE LOSS

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.

You are not alone. Grief can feel 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 and with postvention support and care, the hurt you feel now can evolve and change. The intense, all-consuming emotional pain will not always feel like it does right now, and can ease and soften with grief work and passing of time.

Most people who die by suicide do not want to die; they want to end the pain and cannot see any other option. 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 a singular issue, interaction, conversation, or contributor. It usually involves multiple, complex factors that culminate in a devastating event.

You cannot prevent what you cannot predict. There is no way to have known exactly what would happen at a precise moment in time. We cannot control the thoughts or actions of others.

Eventually, the questions can ease from being so all-encompassing. "Why?" "What if?" Most of us who have experienced suicide loss wrestle with endless questions. This is normal, and over time, can help process our thoughts so that we can eventually find healing and understanding.

What you tell yourself matters. How you talk to yourself about what happened can shape the experience of your grief journey. You deserve to be supported and to create your story in going forward that best helps you heal on a hopeful path towards your future.

Suicide is not a reflection of love. People who die by suicide are in pain and often believed they are a burden. They may have thought that others would be better off without them. We know this to be untrue, but our loved ones likely 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 control in how you choose to heal.

Love never ends. When your loved one died, the love didn't just stop. Your relationship with them can continue. You can keep the positive memories alive in your own life and actions.

3101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22201 • 800-959-TAPS (8277) • taps.org • Media Inquiries: media@taps.org
@tapsorg Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors @tapsorg Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
TAPS is the national nonprofit organization providing compassionate care and comprehensive resources for all those grieving the death of a military or veteran loved one.

ABOUT TAPS SUICIDE PREVENTION AND POSTVENTION DEPARTMENT

TAPS dedicated professionals and subject matter experts address suicide in the service member, veteran, and military family communities (SMVF), as well as across the nation. This powerful combination of trauma-informed care and best practices in clinical expertise, survivor "lived experience," and TAPS' own Suicide Postvention Model offer peer-based grief support for those impacted by suicide and contributes to life-saving prevention efforts.

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