

## What is Grief?

Grief changes your life.

Grief is an emotion, not a disease.

Grief is a natural reaction to death and loss.

Grief can help us better understand who we are.

Grief is a personal experience; no two people grieve the same way.

## The Grief due to a Death by Suicide is Difficult Because...

Suicide is generally not culturally acceptable and carries with it a stigma.

The question 'why' someone died by suicide often may be difficult to answer.

There are often feelings of guilt and shame after a loss by from suicide.

## Reaching Out for Help

### Talk, Talk, Talk.

Talk to someone that you trust. This person could be a family member, friend, teacher, person of faith, counsellor or physician. Join a grief support group.

### Ask for Support.

This is not a sign of weakness but a sign of courage. **Resources can be found on the Council's website.**

**Be yourself and take one day at a time.**

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*The Suicide Awareness Council Wellington-Dufferin is dedicated to helping reduce suicide and its impact on individuals, families, and communities.*

**[www.sacwd.ca](http://www.sacwd.ca)**

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**SUICIDE AWARENESS COUNCIL  
OF WELLINGTON - DUFFERIN**

# GRIEF AFTER SUICIDE



## Normal Grief Feelings due to a Death by Suicide

You will feel many emotions after your loss. Freely give yourself permission to experience those emotions. You may have feelings that are not listed here. Like the waves of an ocean, your grief will sometimes be very powerful and overwhelming. At other times, your grief will seem gentler and even comforting.

### It is okay to feel confused and in shock.

- ◆ Everything is so unreal.
- ◆ This can't be happening to me.

### It is okay to have feelings of denial.

- ◆ Nothing *has* happened so I am going to act as if nothing *has* happened.
- ◆ He/she/they are not dead so everything is going to be okay.

### It is okay to have feelings of shame.

- ◆ Everybody thinks I should have been able to prevent the suicide.
- ◆ Maybe I would be better off dead too!

### It is okay to feel guilty.

- ◆ I should have seen the signs and stopped the suicide.
- ◆ If only I had ...

### It is okay to feel the physical effects of grief.

- ◆ I can't sleep and I'm not hungry.
- ◆ I have a headache, maybe I have a brain tumor.

### It is okay to feel angry.

- ◆ **Self-directed:** Why wasn't I able to prevent it?
- ◆ **Community-directed:** Why couldn't they (doctors, counsellors) have done something?
- ◆ **Directed toward the person who took their own life:** You have ruined my life!

## Signs that You Need Some Help with your Grief

Ask yourself the following questions. Answer them honestly. **It's okay to ask for help.**

Are you becoming dependent on illegal or prescription drugs or alcohol since your loss?

Are you experiencing signs of depression? This can include: constant crying, loss of interest in activities, family and friends, a tendency to isolate yourself, preoccupation with suicidal thoughts, hopelessness and despair.

Are you becoming overly involved with activities, compared to before the suicide? Excessive busyness can be a way of avoiding the pain of grief.

Are you preoccupied with the deceased or with the idea of death?

Are you unable to carry out the simple day-to-day tasks of living?

Are you becoming violent or acting out your feelings inappropriately?

