



Help is at Hand

Support after someone may
have died by suicide

**You are not alone.
There are people available
to help, who will understand
and support you through
this time.**

You can access a growing number of local suicide bereavement support services. There are also national bereavement organisations with free helplines and online support available.

‘It’s five years now since my wife died, and I still miss her every day as she has left such a huge void. I try to concentrate on my daughter and the happiness we share. I have gradually learned to accept that the feelings of pain will never go, and I now have ways to cope with this.’

Chris, whose wife died

**Survivors of Bereavement
by Suicide (SOBS)**

www.uksobs.org

SOBS offers support for those bereaved or affected by suicide through a helpline and a network of local support groups.

Helpline: 0300 111 5065

Every day 9.00 – 21.00

Email: email.support@uksobs.org

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.cruse.org.uk

Cruse supports people after the death of someone close. Their trained volunteers offer face-to-face, telephone, email and website support.

Helpline: 0808 808 1677

Monday and Friday 9.30 – 17.00

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
09.30 – 20.00

Saturday and Sunday 10.00 - 14.00

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

At a Loss

www.ataloss.org

Signposting to bereavement support services whether that be national agencies, specialist providers or local provision, including local suicide bereavement support services.

The Compassionate Friends

www.tcf.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends support people when a child of any age dies through any cause. They have local support groups and online message boards with special sections for those bereaved by suicide.

Helpline: 0345 123 2304

Every day 10.00 – 16.00 and
19.00 – 22.00

Email: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Winston’s Wish

www.winstonswish.org

Winston’s Wish offers support and guidance to bereaved children, young people and families. Their booklet ‘Beyond the Rough Rock’ gives advice on supporting children and young people bereaved by suicide.

Helpline: 08088 020 021

Monday to Friday 09.00 – 17.00

Email: ask@winstonswish.org

**For support with inquests, contact:
Coroners’ Court Support Service**

www.coronerscourtsupportservice.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 2141

Monday to Friday 9.00 - 19.00

Saturday 9.00 - 14.00

Email: helpline@ccss.org.uk

**If you are in emotional distress:
Samaritans**

www.samaritans.org

Whatever you’re going through, a Samaritan will face it with you.

Helpline: 116 123 Every day, 24 hours

Free to call

Email: jo@samaritans.org

‘It helped to meet and speak to a couple who had also lost their child. It allowed me to understand that I was not going mad; they had survived and were stronger emotionally. They gave us hope.’

Shirley, whose son died

www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk

Support after Suicide provides information on what happens after a suicide. You can listen to people’s stories and read and download free resources, such as Help is at Hand (support if you have been bereaved by suicide), Finding the Words (how to talk about suicide loss) and First Hand (support for people who witness a suicide).



You have been given this card because someone close to you has died in circumstances that may be due to suicide.

It has been written by people who have lost someone to suicide. We know that the days and weeks to come will be very difficult, but you do not have to face them alone. There is support, help and information available.

When you first learn that someone has died, you are likely to experience a wide and confusing range of emotions. You may be feeling shocked and desperately sad, you may be full of questions, you may feel angry or numb.

Each person will be affected in their own way, and have different ways of expressing themselves, so don't feel that you have to behave in a certain way. There are no set rules or stages, and no right or wrong way to be feeling.

'In the first few weeks you're battling with immense shock and profound grief. At the same time there are formal processes you have to go through. But each step of the way there were people like the coroner's officer trying to help us with practical or emotional support. It also made a real difference that we asked family and friends to do things to help us out.'

Amy, whose mother died

What may happen next

When a person dies in circumstances that may be due to suicide, there will be an investigation into the death. It may feel like a lot to take in, but there are professionals who will explain what needs to happen, and who will try to carry out their work sensitively and appropriately.

Police: The police need to make sure that no one else was involved in the death, so they will ask questions about what had been happening in the days and weeks before. They may ask you to help them to confirm the person's identity. They may also take some personal belongings but these will be returned to you.

Coroner and coroner's officer: In England and Wales, sudden and unexplained deaths are reported to the coroner, an independent judicial officer.

When the coroner decides to investigate a death, the coroner's officer will contact the next of kin to talk through what needs to happen. Talk to the coroner's officer about when you can make funeral arrangements, and when you will be able to let services like banks and insurance companies know what has happened.

Post-mortem examination: The coroner may decide that a post-mortem examination is necessary to determine how a person has died. A specialist doctor called a pathologist carries out this examination on behalf of the coroner. The coroner will not obtain your consent, but they will try to take account of your religious and cultural needs.

Choosing to see the person: Nobody can make the decision for you about whether to see the person who has died; you may want to remember the person as they were, or you may want to see them to say goodbye. This is a very personal decision, and one you can talk through with family, friends, or with professionals who have experience of helping people at a time like this.

How to tell people what has happened

One of the first and hardest challenges you could face is letting family, friends, colleagues or neighbours know what has happened.

The suggestions below may help you decide what words you would like to use.

[person's name] has died...

...I'll tell you more when I feel able to.

...It is too soon for us to talk about how they died.

...I don't want to say any more at the moment.

...It looks like they might have taken their own life.

...We cannot imagine what happened. The police think they may have taken their own life, but we don't know yet.

... We think it was intentional. We knew they had thought about it before, and we hoped that they'd find a way through their problems.

www.gov.uk

This easy to use website has advice and information on coroner investigations, funerals and informing services. You can also access the Tell Us Once service to notify a range of services easily and at once.



Help is at Hand

Supported by:



Department
of Health &
Social Care



National
Suicide Prevention
Alliance



Support
After
Suicide
Partnership

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