

THE SHOCK AND TRAUMA OF SUICIDE LOSS

Gentle guidance for survivors of suicide loss

A suicide loss can leave the mind and body struggling to absorb what happened. You may feel unreal, disconnected, alert to danger, or pulled back into painful moments. These reactions are not signs that you are grieving incorrectly. They can be the nervous system's response to a sudden, overwhelming loss.

WHEN THE LOSS FEELS UNREAL

Shock may protect you from taking in more than you can bear at once. Understanding may come slowly.

- Numbness or disbelief
- Feeling detached from yourself or others
- Difficulty remembering or concentrating
- Moving through the day on autopilot

HOW TRAUMA MAY APPEAR

Trauma responses can show up emotionally, physically, and through changes in daily behavior.

- Intrusive thoughts, images, or dreams
- Startling easily or feeling constantly alert
- Avoiding reminders or searching for details
- Sleep changes, tension, nausea, or exhaustion

GENTLE WAYS TO FEEL SAFER

Small grounding practices can help your body return to the present when distress rises.

- Name five things you can see or feel
- Slow your breathing and press your feet down
- Choose one familiar routine for the day
- Limit exposure to distressing details and media

SUPPORT OVER TIME

Trauma and grief may need different kinds of care. You do not have to manage either alone.

- Stay near people who help you feel steady
- Seek trauma-informed grief support
- Let trusted people assist with practical tasks
- Ask for urgent help if you feel unsafe

A GENTLE REMINDER

You do not have to force yourself to understand everything now. Safety, steadiness, and compassionate support are enough for this moment.

Your grief is real. Your questions are welcome. You do not have to carry this alone.

