

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE
DEALING WITH

Suicide



·There is not much anyone can say when a loved one dies by suicide. It is okay to simply say, “I can’t possibly know what you are going through, but, know that I am here for you”.

·Please don’t use the term, ‘committed suicide’. Using the word “committed” can be interpreted as a “crime” was committed. Suicide is not a crime. Suicide is unfortunately stigmatized, and this can cause more distress. Instead, say that you are sorry that your loved one felt so deeply sad that they saw no other way out of their pain.

·It is not comforting to say that a loved one is “out of pain now”. It’s not a comfort to the person left behind. People who take their own life are not selfish or weak. Loved ones need to come to their own conclusions and understanding about what has happened. There can be many factors to someone completing suicide.

·Don’t ask what happened. Families will tell you the details if they feel they need to. Families can feel like the details of the death of their loved one can be sensationalized causing them to want to isolate themselves.

·Always use the name of the person who died. Saying their name is music to loved ones' ears.

·Tell your friend that they can talk to you. Tell them you can handle it. This gives them permission to share their loss with you when they are ready.

·Families are in a state of shock after a suicide. They need time to digest what has happened. They may not want to talk at first, but encourage them to lean on you at any time.

·As time goes on, don’t assume that they are getting better. It is not uncommon for people to feel a lot worse before they feel better. Months can go by and families can still be in a state of shock.

·Actions can show love and caring without saying anything. Doing laundry, cooking, shopping, and other practical help, such as with children will be welcomed. Sometimes, just showing up is what is most helpful. Be proactive, make an offer of help with dinner, doing laundry. Ask to pick what day and make a set plan. Realize that this is hard for you as well! Doing something will help!

