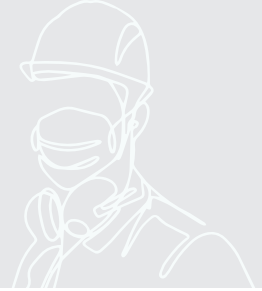


# TOOLBOX TALK

## Postvention: Coping with Suicide Loss



Losing a loved one, friend or coworker to suicide is a traumatic experience that comes with a unique form of bereavement. Suddenly losing someone so close in such a manner can lead to many complex feelings of grief and loss that, if left unaddressed, can create ongoing difficulties that will impact many, if not all, areas of someone's life. Understanding the uniqueness of suicide loss bereavement and learning how to get support can go a long way in promoting healing and post-traumatic growth.

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

Historically, it was estimated that only four to six additional people were impacted by each suicide loss. In reality, for every one life lost to suicide, 135 others are impacted. **That means nearly 6.6 million people each year are exposed to a suicide loss.** Furthermore, estimates suggest that over half of all individuals will know someone who has died by suicide across their lifetime. (USPV)

### **WHY IT MATTERS**

Suicide loss is different than other kinds of loss. Survivors will likely experience normal grief reactions but may also experience guilt, confusion, abandonment, shame and anger. It's possible to also face stigma and blame. Reaching out for support and understanding one's response may need long-term support are critical components of the healing process.

### **GOOD TO KNOW**

- Acknowledge and accept your feelings, whatever they are, without judgment.
- Try not to take others' reactions personally. Their reactions may be different than your own.
- Talk to others about your feelings and reactions.
- Accept help from others. Connect regularly with people you find supportive.
- Care for yourself both emotionally and physically. Keep doing things you enjoy or find comforting.
- Be mindful of extremes in work, sleep and substance use.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help, including from a professional.
- Lastly, healing takes time. Allow yourself the time you need to grieve. Grief has no predictable timetable and setbacks are normal and part of the healing process. Below are some helpful resources to provide loss survivors.

- **Uniting for Suicide Postvention (USPV)** [[www.mirecc.va.gov](http://www.mirecc.va.gov)]
- **Alliance for Hope** [[www.allianceofhope.org](http://www.allianceofhope.org)]
- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)** [[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)]
- **Contact local suicide loss survivor groups to connect the loss survivor with local community resources** [[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)]



**CONSTRUCTION SUICIDE  
PREVENTION WEEK**

Call, text or chat **988** for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Find resources at **[ConstructionSuicidePrevention.com](http://ConstructionSuicidePrevention.com)**.