

SOS Groups:

Lower Bucks County, PA:

Aria Health/Bucks County Campus
Conference Room D, Ground Floor
380 N. Oxford Valley Rd, Langhorne, PA
4th Tuesday 7:30Pm

Central Bucks County, PA:

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
2131 Palomino Drive, Warrington, PA
2nd Tuesday 7:30 PM

Chester County, PA:

Paoli Memorial Hospital
Paoli Medical Building, Willistown Room
Route 30, Paoli, PA
2nd Wednesday 7:30 PM

Delaware County, PA:

Main Line Health Center, Comm. Rm. C
3855 West Chester Pk (PA Rte 3),
Newtown Square, PA
3rd Tuesday 7:00 PM

Montgomery County, PA:

Bryn Mawr Hospital, Clothier Auditorium
Bryn Mawr Ave & County Line Rd
Bryn Mawr, PA
1st Wednesday 7:30 PM

Philadelphia County, PA:

3535 Market St., Phila., PA - Rm 2037
1st Tuesday 7:30PM

Aria Health, Torresdale Campus
Conference Room #4

Knights & Red Lion Rds., Phila., PA
2nd Tuesday 7:30 PM

Camden County, NJ

Barrington Municipal Building
229 Trenton Ave., Barrington NJ
2nd Tuesday 7:00 pm

It is also very hard to believe that someone that you feel very close to, someone that you would do anything to help, may be suicidal.

Why didn't my friend tell me?

Some may not want to burden others with their problems. Some feel shame at being suicidal. Psychological pain is not conducive to communication. It sets its sufferers apart from those around them. Severe pain is alienating. It takes away the sense that anything can be done about it. Being suicidal is a tremendous burden. Most suicidal individuals do not really want to die. They just want to end their pain. Many who complete suicide struggle with this to the end.

Why didn't anybody do anything?

Maybe nobody saw anything or maybe they thought the person was dealing with her or his problems or maybe they didn't want to intrude or maybe they offered help and it was turned down. or maybe the help needed wasn't available. Identifying and intervening with suicide risk is difficult even for professionals.

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Does suicide loss follow any pattern?

Every one grieves differently as a person and in terms of their relationship with the victim. A suicide loss is like a "personal 9/11."

It is common to feel powerless and helpless. This is because you have endured a sudden traumatic loss.

Gradually you will recover, but you may always feel differently about this loss than others that you may have experienced.

Your response may be more intense and complicated if you have lost someone to suicide previously in your personal life .

Will I need any kind of help?

Most people do not need counseling but if you find yourself struggling with the loss do not hesitate to seek help. Support is critical to recovery from suicide loss and groups such as SOS are an effective way to receive it. Support groups are "safe places" with others who understand suicide loss. Information sharing is a key element. Small groups sessions at the workplace, perhaps with an outside resource person, can be useful.

Local mental health providers may be a good place to look for someone to speak to you and your co-workers. Keep in mind that organizations grieve and the loss affects everyone at every level.

What about my friend's family?

Families also react to suicide differently. Their response depends on the victim's role in the family (i.e., parent, spouse, sibling, child, etc.), and the relationship. The family may be angry at the victim or not seem interested in condolences. Remember they have suffered a terrible loss and they don't know how to deal with it either. They may be looking for a reason and may see job stress or other work issues as playing a part. It is best not to get into speculation about what may have caused the loss. It is enough to express your respects and show that you cared for their loved one.

Family members may especially benefit from participation in an SOS support group. This can be gently suggested if felt appropriate.

About SOS:

SOS is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization. It started in the Philadelphia, PA area in 1983. SOS believes that sharing experiences and feelings with is the best form of help. Our mission is to offer support to individuals and families who have lost someone to suicide in the tri-state area.

How to Help:

SOS welcomes tax deductible donations and memorial gifts in any amount. You may designate SOS for your United Way contribution. Our number is 09449.

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Morton, PA***

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***SOS, Inc. thanks MCES, Inc.,
Norristown, PA, for help
in writing this brochure***

Coping After a Suicide Loss at Work

***Answers for those who
have lost a friend or
colleague to suicide***



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Why do I feel the way I do?

What you feel is normal. You may ask: How can what I feel be “normal”? It is what happened to the co-worker that you lost that is abnormal. Your intense emotional response is the normal aftermath to a suicide.

You may feel utterly lost. Most of us need some support after a suicide. With other types of losses in the past you grieved but may have recovered within a short time. Suicide loss is very different.

Suicide is not something that most of us knew anything about before experiencing such a loss. We need to know what suicide is to begin to relate to our loss. We need knowledge to fend off ignorance about suicide that we may hear and that we may find upsetting and hurtful.

Why do I have conflicting emotions?

You may feel betrayed, angry, guilty, and disoriented. You may feel that your friend let you down. You may be angry that he or she never gave you the chance to help. You may feel that you (or someone else) should have or could have done something to prevent this.

This is what happens after a suicide. Again, nobody is ever ready for it.

Why did this happen?

Every suicide is different, but studies suggest that intense psychological pain and hopelessness are contributing factors. Psychological pain arises when there is some seemingly irresolvable and frustrating situation. It may be a compelling personal, interpersonal, financial problem, or something else. Whatever the problem, it is seen as devastating. Coping skills do not work well and self-esteem and one's sense of control diminish. Thoughts of suicide may occur. These may lead to a desire to die, a specific suicide plan, and identifying lethal means. This is when a fatal suicide attempt may happen.

Suicide is not an impulsive act; it is the planned outcome of a process over time. Suicide is complex; many factors are always involved. What we may think is *the* reason may only be one factor of many.

Why didn't we know?

It is difficult to determine when someone is at very high risk of suicide, and most people just don't know the warning signs of suicide. Not all suicidal individuals show clear signs of risk. Many of those who are suicidal may make some effort to hide it. Others may have feared seeming weak if they asked for help.