

Notice:

This information is given for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended to be treatment or counseling advice.

Bereavement as a result of suicide

Introduction

Bereavement through suicide carries with it other painful aspects, when the loved one has “chosen” to die and leave us.

- **Sudden death** - Shock, being unprepared, unfinished business
- **Helplessness** - Suicide is final, we are rendered unable to help the person in distress and there is no chance to prevent the death.
- **Being out of control** - Someone has taken control, we can only live with the consequences. They may leave a note (or not), but we cannot “answer” it.
- **Untimely death** - The person may have ended their life before reaching a “ripe old age”, when death is expected and we can make sense of it.
- **Cry for help** - We may believe the suicide was actually a “cry for help” and that the person did not really intend for their life to end.
- **Sorting out business affairs** - As with sudden (or even any) death, the person may have left dependents, and may not have put their affairs in order. Or, they may have done this meticulously and secretly, as if this suicide has been well planned – but no-one has suspected it.
- **Anger** - We can feel very angry at this act and at the person, but find it hard to ventilate this fury.
- **Guilt** - Sometimes guilt is overwhelming, guilt that we did something or failed to do something to prevent the death. There can be many “if only”s.
- **Blame** - We, or others around us, may feel a need, in anger and sadness, to find someone to blame for the suicide.
- **Mixture of feelings** - There may be competing feelings, including relief, when the death marks the end of a chronic or terminal illness, such as depression or cancer, AIDS, Motor Neurone Disease or other disorder.