

- 3 Anger, guilt, confusion and forgetfulness are normal responses. You are not crazy, you are in mourning.
- 4 You may feel angry at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself. It's okay to express it in a safe way.
- 5 You may feel guilt for what you think you did or did not do. You can turn guilt into regret by forgiving yourself.
- 6 You may have suicidal thoughts. It does not mean that your will act on these thoughts. Ask for help if you are having them often, or if you are thinking of acting on them.
- 7 Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
- 8 Remember the choice was theirs, not yours. No one has that much influence on another person's life.
- 9 Try to put off major decisions.
- 10 Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
- 11 It is normal to have physical reactions to your grief such as headaches, loss of appetite or feeling ill.
- 12 Being able to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
- 13 Be kind and gentle with yourself.

Adapted from: Bolton, I (1993) My Son...My Son... A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss or Suicide

Support Numbers

Samaritans	1850 60 90 60
	www.samaritans.ie
Aware (Depression)	1890 303 302
	www.aware.ie
Console	1800 201 890
	www.console.ie
IAS (Irish Association of Suicidology)	094 9250858
	www.ias.ie
Caredoc	1850 334 999
	(6pm – 8am, South East)
Barnardos	1850 222 300
	www.barnardos.ie
Comhar (Adult Counselling Service)	1800 234 118
1Life – Suicide Helpline	1800 24 7 100
	Text HELP to 51444

Regional Suicide Resource Office,
Front Block, St. Patrick's Hospital,
John's Hill, Waterford.

Tel: 051 874013 Fax: 051 853037



INFORMATION LEAFLET

Losing Someone You Love to Suicide



You may struggle with what you tell other people. Although you should make whatever decision feels right to you, most people find it best to simply acknowledge that their loved one has died by suicide.

Even though it may seem difficult, it is important to keep in contact with other people during the stress-filled months after a loved one's suicide.

Everyone grieves at their own pace. There is no set rhythm or timeline for healing.

You may find anniversaries, birthdays and other special occasions especially difficult. You might want to think about whether to continue old traditions or create some new ones. You may also experience unexpected waves of sadness. These are a normal part of the grieving process.

What to expect – some normal emotions.

At first:

- Feeling numb, shock
- Denial, it did not happen, looking for other explanations, becoming angry at others
- Shame, guilt and rejection, feeling a lack of social support, wanting to hide the truth
- Relief if the person had been very ill before they died

Later:

- Enormous pain and confusion, needing to know why it happened
- Feelings of panic, that you are losing your sanity
- Anger at yourself, the person who has died or others
- Difficulty relating to family members, crisis in parental identity
- Worry that you or another person in the family may be doomed to suicide
- Finding it hard to trust others again
- Low mood, no energy
- Feeling tense or anxious
- Finding it hard to sleep

What has helped other families?

- Learning to mourn
- Accepting all your feelings
- Talking honestly with family and friends
- Having a regular chat and check up with a doctor
- Looking at pictures and keepsakes
- Visiting the grave
- Going through and storing the person's belongings
- Writing a letter to the person who had died
- Being able to be angry but accepting that you love the person who died
- Meeting other people with similar experiences

Suggestions to help you cope

- 1 Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
- 2 You may feel overwhelmed by how strong your feelings are, but all your feelings are normal.