

Edward Christian Church ***How to Comfort Those Caught in the Aftermath -pt2***

What We Say: through Our Actions, Responses, Words can Help Lead a Survivor Through to Healing or Fall Deeper into the Trap of Depression and Despair . We Need to Be Aware of this Power and to Never Take it Lightly. Esp. with Siblings..

How to Address Young Siblings After Suicide

- *When a child carries out a suicide attempt, family / friends are left emotionally shattered and mentally scattered, not knowing what to do with their feelings or how to make sense of what has happened.*
- *Many loved ones feel as though they are in a dense fog with no sense of direction and no destination in sight. Just trying to survive is often seen as the task at hand, but overcoming is what the Lord has in mind for His children.*
- *The **depth, degree, and duration** of the **impact** on your remaining children and how you deal with them will vary per child based on individual temperament, age, and maturity.*

There are some common clues to look for, identify, and resolve as you seek to help your children become overcomers. Some of the feelings of those left behind may experience include ...

- **Anger** at the sibling for leaving w-out saying goodbye or talking with them about it before doing it, or anger at God for allowing it, or anger at a parent for causing it
- **Rejection** because sibling's not wanting to be w- them or valuing them enough to stay
- **Fear** of being alone in their bedroom or playroom at night because something or someone in the darkness may hurt them, or fear that their sibling may be punished by God for all eternity
- **Sadness** over the loss of a cherished confidant, constant companion
- **Confusion** about why sibling chose suicide/ whether they are destined to suicide too
- **Guilt** that they may be somehow responsible for their sibling's being unhappy and despondent enough to want to die rather than live with them
- **Hopeless** about facing the future without their sibling to help them, to spend time with them, to teach them the ropes, to understand them
- **Alone** without the only family member they can truly relate to, play with, confide in, tell secrets to, look to for security, advice, and guidance

Typically, children lack the skills to clearly express their emotional reactions to traumatic events, therefore, you will need to ...

- **Ask Questions** that will aid children in clarifying/ communicating their feelings.
- **Listen Intently** to them/ mirror their feelings back to them, validating them, comforting them, / extending hope / encouragement to them.
- **Respond to Their Questions** and needs by attempting to answer and meet them in practical, meaningful ways.
- **Spend More Time** with your children. Engage them in activities they enjoy and include them in some of your activities, including your work and free time.
- **Pay Attention to Any Change** in their mood and in their patterns of eating and sleeping, studying and playing, socializing and relating.
- **Realize Your Children Are Most Vulnerable** to suicide during the days and months following the death of their sibling and on future anniversary dates such as the deceased child's birthday or the suicide date.
- **Provide Professional Counseling** for your children should they show signs that depression or stress is impairing their level of functioning.
- **Pray For and With Your Children.** Read the Bible with them and work through the daily devotional book *Seeing Yourself Through God's Eyes* with them.
- As you seek to yield yourself and your children into the Lord's strong, healing hands and as you keep your heart fully committed to Him, be assured that ...

"The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."

-2 Chronicles 16:9