***How to Comfort Those Caught in the Aftermath* -pt1**

**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**.**

**Sympathy** *says, “I’m sorry you’re hurt.”* **Empathy** *says, “I’ll hurt with you.”* **Compassion** *says, “I’ll stick with you until the hurt is gone.” We all need that compassionate friend when we’ve lost a loved one to suicide.*

**Typically, those who have lost** suicidal **family members feel** more **pain than those whose loved ones have died of** natural **causes. They feel** more **rejection and** more **abandonment and often feel** responsible **for the suicide.**

**No one is** exempt **from the gravity of this kind of** grief**. ... It is a grief like no other. For those left** behind**, the** emotional **fallout from suicide is more** devastating **than most people could ever imagine. Few people** know **how to come alongside and** comfort **those who suffer the aftermath.**

**Tormenting emotions cause survivors to spiral through the process of** grief**, and their haunting question of “Why?” is** never **really answered. Even when suicide strikes within our own boundary of** relationships**, we can feel** inadequate **to face the reality of such a tragedy!** Survivors **experience ...**

**A Grief Like No Other -*As a survivor, you can feel ...***

*•* ***Shock*** *... “This is a mistake. I saw her just a few hours ago.”*

*•* ***Rejection*** *... “He thought death would be better than living with me!”*

*•* ***Guilt*** *... “I should have done something to prevent this.”*

*•* ***Anger*** *... “How could she do this to me?”*

*•* ***Shame*** *... “What will I tell others?”*

*•* ***Fear*** *... “I’m afraid of whatever is wrong with our family!”*

*•* ***Sadness*** *... “I keep dreaming that I’ll be with him again.”*

**As a survivor, you need to know the** compassionate **promise of the Lord. He** hears **your heartache and** sees **your tears. The Bible says that after a period of time ...**

*“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” (*[*Psalm 147:3*](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ps+147%3A3)*)*

**A Friend Like No Other -*As a friend of the survivor ...***

*•* **Be Honest** *... Express your own feelings of grief/ confusion. ... Don’t be afraid to use the word suicide.*

*•* **Be Present** *... Be willing to just “be there”—your presence is enough!*

*•* **Be Listening** *... Hear your friend’s heart and encourage your friend to express feelings.*

*•* **Be Accepting** *... Accept all the emotions, no matter how raw or offensive the feelings may seem to you.*

*•* **Be Nonjudgmental** *... Refuse to pass judgment on the one who died of suicide or those who have survived.*

*Trust in a compassionate God.*

*•* **Be Forgiving** *... Let the survivors see your heart of forgiveness. They may feel the need to confess and receive*

*God’s forgiveness, especially if they are experiencing guilt.*

*•* **Be Spirit-led** *... Be led by the Holy Spirit. Trust Him to give you the appropriate words to say.*

*•* **Be Prayerful** *... Offer to pray if the survivor seems receptive. Commit to lifting the whole family up*

*“There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” -***Proverbs 18:24**

**Discussing Suicide**

* **Question: *“Is there a ‘better way’ to talk about suicide?”***
* **Answer***:* **Although many people speak of someone who** *“committed suicide,”* **the less judgmental, more sensitive term is speaking of one who** *“died of suicide.”* **Likewise, rather than a completed or successful suicide (***which sounds too positive***), the term** *“suicide death”* **is preferable. Pray that you will use wisdom with your words. ...**

*“Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.” -***Prov 9:9**