

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)

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