



Trauma Intervention Programs of San Diego

SUGGESTIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE

- Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
- Struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why" or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
- Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings but all your feelings are normal.
- Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy, you are in mourning.
- Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself. It's okay to express it.
- You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do. Guilt can turn into regret, through forgiveness.
- Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on those thoughts.
- Remember to take one moment or one day at a time.
- Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
- Don't be afraid to cry.
- Give yourself time to heal.
- Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
- Expect setbacks. If emotions return like a tidal wave, you may only be experiencing a remnant of grief, an unfinished piece.
- Try to put off major decisions.
- Give yourself permission to get professional help.
- Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
- Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
- Set your own limits and learn to say no.
- Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
- Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as Compassionate Friends or Survivors of Suicide groups. If not, ask a professional to help start one.
- Call on your personal faith to help you through.
- It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, e.g. headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep.
- The willingness to laugh at others and yourself is healing.
- Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting.
- Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and even go beyond just surviving.