

# When Someone You Love Dies by Suicide

The sadness you feel after someone you love dies by suicide may be different than the sadness you have felt after other losses.

When someone you love dies by suicide, you may have a lot of questions. It may be hard to understand or accept their death.

Your feelings may change every day, or many times a day. This is common.

You may feel:

- › Angry
- › Guilty
- › Ashamed
- › Betrayed
- › Sad
- › Overwhelmed
- › Relieved
- › At peace

You may also have physical symptoms of grief, like:

- › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- › Headache
- › Chest pain
- › Shortness of breath (trouble breathing)
- › General body weakness
- › Fatigue (tiredness)

Talk to your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if:

- › you are worried about any of these symptoms.
- › you have any other questions.

Even though it may not seem like it right now, **you will feel better in time.**

Grieving is different for everyone. **There is no right or wrong way to grieve.**

Try not to compare yourself or your grief to others.

It may help to:

- › connect with your loved ones.
- › talk to a health care provider (like a counsellor, social worker, or psychologist).
- › write down how you are feeling, and any questions you have.
- › find new ways to express your feelings (like painting, dance, photography).
- › join a grief support group.
- › join a grief discussion group online.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you or someone you know has questions or concerns about grief, talk to a health care provider. We are here to help.

It is important to take care of yourself while you grieve.

- › Eat regular, healthy meals.
- › Get enough sleep.
- › Spend time outdoors.
- › **Do not** drink too much alcohol or abuse drugs.
- › Avoid making any major life decisions.

Sometimes grief does not go away. **If you have feelings of intense (strong) sadness or physical symptoms that are getting worse:**

- Talk to your primary health care provider.

**or**

- Talk to a mental health care provider:
  - › Mental Health and Addictions
  - › <https://mha.nshealth.ca/en>

**If it is an emergency:**

- Call 911.

**or**

- Call the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line:
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-888-429-8167

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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