

HEALING AFTER LOSS

A RESOURCE BOOKLET FOR INDONESIAN SUICIDE LOSS SURVIVORS



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“This book is lovingly dedicated to those who have lost someone to suicide, and to the ones who are no longer with us but remain forever in our hearts and memories. Each page was shaped by heartfelt stories from survivors and the gentle support of those who care.

*May this guide offer comfort, strength, and hope—**a quiet reminder that in every step of healing, we are never truly alone. We carry their memories with us, and walk this path together.***”



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Introduction

What is this?

This book is part of a PhD project at the Centre for Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, The University of Melbourne, in collaboration with the Centre for Public Mental Health, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Gadjah Mada.

The content is drawn from interviews with 16 suicide loss survivors and 15 support providers in Indonesia—including psychologists, art therapists, brain gym practitioners, and faith leaders—combined with literature reviews to gather information relevant to the healing journey. This guide is intended as a starting point and **a source of hope for survivors as they navigate their path toward recovery.**

How is this booklet intended to be used?

Many survivors feel lost in the aftermath of their loss. Questions like “Why did this happen?”, “Are my feelings normal?”, and “Where can I find help?” often arise, without easy answers. This book is here as an initial resource to help address some of those questions.

That said, **there is no single “right” way to grieve**—each person’s journey is unique. This guide does not offer fixed solutions, but instead presents a range of insights and activities that can be adapted to your own needs and healing rhythm. Some of the features included in this book are:



Story corner: Paraphrased reflections from fellow survivors to inspire and accompany you.



Tips from survivors: Suggestions from fellow survivors to support your healing journey.



Reflection corner: Gentle prompts inviting you to reflect and write down your thoughts based on specific topics, using any paper or medium you prefer.



Want to know more? Additional information for you to explore more deeply.

Remember, this book is not a substitute for professional help. If you or someone you know is struggling with distressing thoughts or suicidal thoughts, we urge you to reach out to your local community health service center for assistance.

Terminology



Survivor: An individual who has lost someone meaningful in their life, such as a family member or close friend, due to suicide.



Professionals: A trained professional—such as a psychologist, counselor, therapist, or doctor—who provides mental or physical health support.



Community-based support provider: A support provider from the community, such as a faith leader, community figure, or village health worker, who offers emotional and spiritual support based on local values and beliefs.



Spiritual: Anything related to the meaning of life, the soul, and one's connection to something greater than oneself—such as God, the universe, or deeply held values.



Understanding Suicide



"The human heart is a deep ocean full of secrets. We may never truly know why someone chose their path, but we can still honor the journey of their life."

Understanding Suicide

Why did they do it?

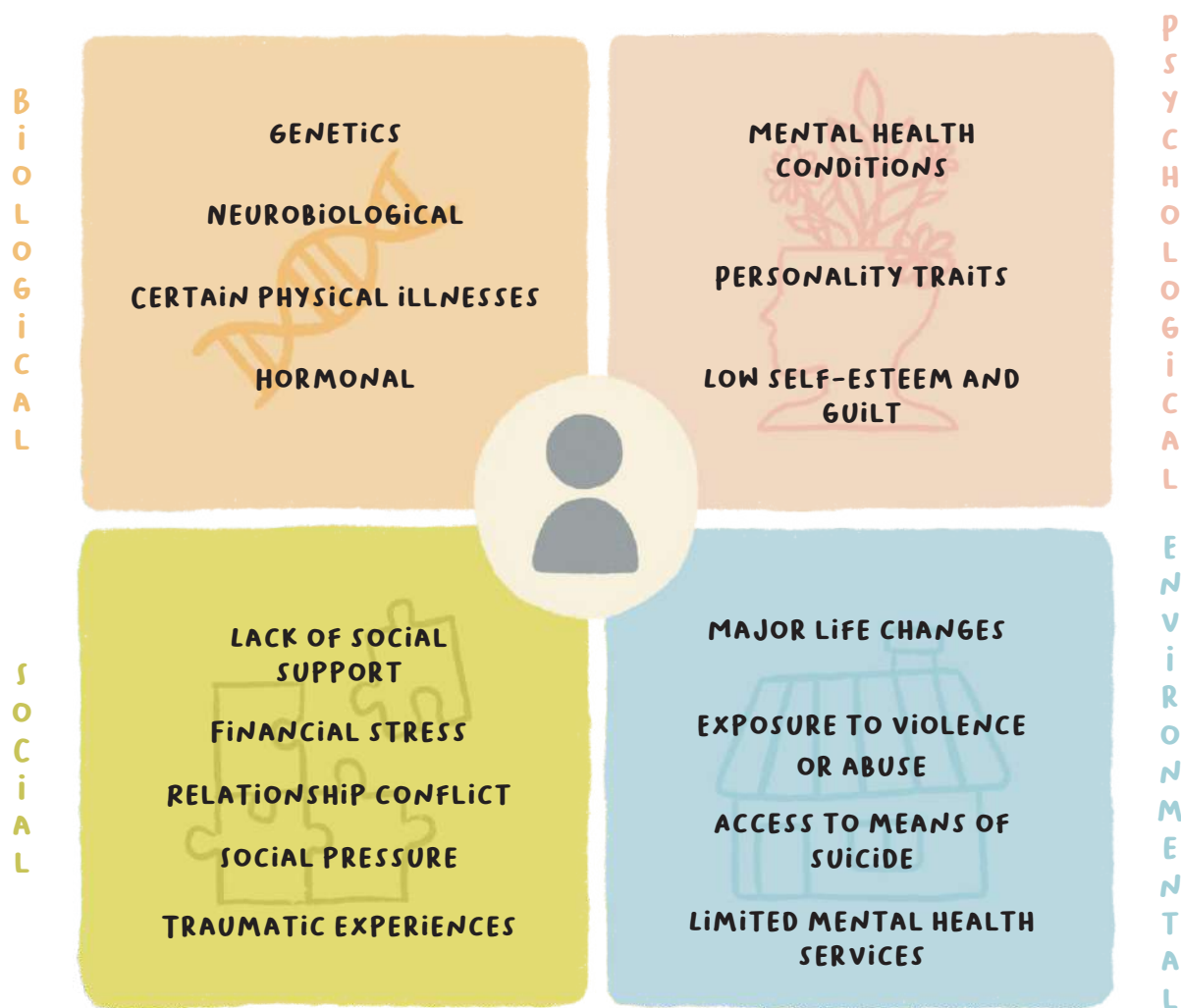
Since childhood, he grew up in an unstable family environment. There were many things he kept to himself—perhaps because he didn't know who he could turn to. He had a very sensitive personality—whenever he felt hurt or guilty, he tended to withdraw. When we were younger, we were actually quite close, but after I moved to another city, our communication gradually faded. I didn't realize that distance would become permanent. I heard that he had attempted suicide a few times. But there was no professional support, no one truly there for him—only alternative forms of help. I once suggested for him to see a psychologist, but because I was still young, my voice wasn't taken seriously. To this day, I still wonder—what if I had been braver and spoken up louder?

*Now I understand that suicide is not a decision made in a moment. **It's the result of small, untreated wounds, a deep sense of loneliness that no one sees, and burdens carried in silence.** All of it slowly builds up until it feels like there's no way out. But I also know now—**recognizing all of that isn't easy...***

- A grieving family



- A person's decision to die by suicide is often **not because they want to end their life, but because they want to end pain** that feels unbearable.
- Much like physical illness, **suicide does not have a single cause^[1]**. The diagram below shows some of the risk factors for suicide:



Biological Factors:

- **Genetics:** A family history of mental health conditions^[2].
- **Neurobiological:** Chemical imbalances in the brain can lead to difficulty regulating emotions and impulses^[3].
- **Certain physical illnesses:** Such as brain injury, epilepsy, or chronic illnesses^[4].
- **Hormonal:** Adolescence and older age are vulnerable periods due to biological changes and developmental challenges^[5].

Psychological Factors:

- **Mental health conditions:** Such as depression, anxiety disorders, and bipolar disorder^{[2],[6]}.
- **Personality traits:** Perfectionism without self-acceptance can lead to despair^[6].
- **Low self-esteem and guilt:** Feeling worthless or like a burden can worsen one's mental state^[7].

Social Factors:

- **Lack of social support:** Feeling like there's no one to turn to^[8].
- **Financial stress:** Job loss, heavy debt, or other financial pressures^[8].
- **Relationship conflict:** Family or interpersonal disputes^[9].
- **Social pressure:** Negative societal views toward mental health issues^[8].
- **Traumatic experiences:** Physical, emotional abuse, or past trauma^[10].

Environmental Factors:

- **Major life changes:** Loss of a loved one, divorce^[10].
- **Exposure to violence or abuse:** Whether at home, school, or in the community^[11].
- **Access to means of suicide:** Availability of tools or locations^[12].
- **Limited mental health services:** Lack of access to or availability of professional support^[13].

Remember, suicide is not caused by a single factor, but an interaction of various risk factors.

Why is it important for me to know this?

- **Easing the Burden of Guilt:** Recognizing that this is not your fault and that many things are beyond our control.
- **Avoiding Self-Blame or Blaming Others:** Understanding that not everything can be predicted or prevented.
- **Seeing with Compassion:** Realizing that the person who died was not “weak” or “selfish,” but was facing pain that felt overwhelmingly heavy.
- **Focusing on Healing:** Allowing yourself space to grieve and finding the best ways to care for yourself.

Want to know more?

- Survivor's story blog: [Part of you](#)
- Article on suicide, consisted of a brief explanation on suicide, risk factors, prevention efforts, etc: [Information on suicide by RSJ dr. Radjiman Wediodiningrat](#)



Myths & Facts

Myth: We must always be able to explain why our loved one died by suicide

Fact: It's okay not to have all the answers. The reasons behind suicide are often complex and difficult to fully understand—even for the person who died. What matters is giving ourselves space to feel, grieve, and find peace in our own way. **Healing isn't about solving every question, but accepting that some things are beyond our control**—and that it's not our fault.

Myth: People who end their lives are just seeking attention

Fact: This is not true. **Thoughts of suicide often arise when someone is experiencing deep emotional pain and doesn't know how to ease it^[14]**. If someone talks about suicide, it can be a sign that they are in urgent need of help.

Myth: All suicide loss survivors feel guilty

Fact: Emotions after a loss vary widely. Not all survivors feel guilt. Just like other types of loss, some may feel guilt, while others do not. If you're struggling with guilt, reach out for support from loved ones or a professional. But remember, **feeling guilty is not a requirement**.

Myth: I should push away my grief

Fact: Avoiding grief does not help with healing. Facing the pain is a crucial part of the grieving process. Hiding your feelings or pretending to be "okay" only delays healing. Being honest about your emotions can help you receive better support and free you from blaming yourself for having those feelings.

Myth: Expressing grief or questioning my faith means I'm weak

Fact: Expressing grief and questioning faith are not signs of weakness. Even those with strong faith may experience doubt or anger when faced with deep tragedy. Acknowledging these feelings shows courage—it means you're facing your pain and seeking healing.

Myth: Grief after a suicide loss will always last longer and be more complicated than other types of grief

Fact: The grief we feel can be shaped by many things, such as our relationship with the person or the cause of death^[15]. But **these do not determine how long the grieving process will last**. It's true that survivors of suicide loss may face stigma, painful questions, and intense emotions. However, everyone experiences grief in their own way, and there is no set timeline for healing. Your grief journey is your own.

Myth: Once I've made peace with my grief, I won't feel sad about it anymore

Fact: Making peace with grief doesn't mean you'll never feel sad again. Sadness may return, especially when triggered by memories or certain moments. But finding peace means you're better able to live your life, knowing how to respond to those feelings, and accepting that sadness is a natural part of the healing process.

Want to know more?

- Into The Light Indonesia: [Myth and Fact around Suicide](#)
- Alan D Wolfelt, Ph.D: [Dispelling the misconceptions about suicide, grief, and mourning](#)



*“Making peace with the loss of someone to suicide is a very long journey. Feelings of guilt, thoughts like if only I had cared more, paid more attention, and so many others often swirl in your mind. Forgive yourself—this human being with so many flaws and limitations. Don’t hesitate to seek help from your community or mental health professionals. **Thank you for holding on**” :)*

– Erika, Survivor



Understanding Suicide Loss



"Grief is such a profound experience, and it can't always be explained; the sense of loss feels so real and sincere. It is love in its purest form." – Megan Devine, It's OK That You're Not OK

Understanding Suicide Loss

*It felt like I didn't want to wake up—because waking up felt more like entering a nightmare. For six months, I was like that, with no energy to do anything. It wasn't until I talked to someone that I realized what I was experiencing was depression... or maybe PTSD. To be honest, **depression can feel strangely comforting**. Being sad, shutting yourself away, crying all the time, not having to meet anyone—that felt easier. **But that's exactly what makes it dangerous**. I know that feeling so well, and I didn't want to stay trapped in it forever. I have young children, and one of the things that helped me get back up was thinking of them. I just thought—if not me, who else will be there for them?*

– A grieving mother



*I lost one of my parents to depression, and my feelings at the time were all over the place. As an only child, I was the sole caregiver for years—managing their mood changes, especially when they were angry or unwell... the exhaustion was very real. After it happened, there was a moment of relief, but it was quickly followed by deep guilt. I kept asking myself, '**How could I feel this way? Am I a bad person?**' It took years for me to understand that what I experienced was caregiver burnout. **Those conflicting emotions didn't mean I didn't care—they were human.***

– A grieving daughter



Is it normal for me to feel this way?

- Grief is a deeply personal experience—there is no “right” or “wrong” way to feel.
- What we feel can be shaped by many things, such as our relationship with the person who passed away or the circumstances of the loss.
- **Every emotion—whether it’s similar to or different from what other survivors feel—is a valid part of our healing.** There is nothing wrong with how you feel.

Here are some emotions you may experience^[16]:

Shock/Disbelief



Sudden loss can leave someone feeling numb or stunned. This isn’t a sign that you don’t care—it’s the body’s way of protecting us from overwhelming pain.

Anger



Anger may arise—toward yourself, others, God, or even the person who died. Acknowledging these feelings without judgment is the first step toward working through them.

Guilt



You may find yourself thinking about what you could have done differently. But it’s important to remember that **not everything is within our control**. Giving yourself space to accept this is part of the healing process.

Sadness and emptiness



These feelings can come in waves and may feel all-encompassing. It’s okay to feel deeply sad—grieving means you loved deeply.

Anxiety and fear



A sudden loss can trigger fear of losing others or anxiety about forming new relationships. These are natural reactions to trauma and the depth of your love.

Blindsided



Sometimes, loss feels like something was suddenly taken from you without warning. This can lead to deep confusion and emotional pain.

Here are some other emotions that suicide loss survivors commonly experience as they navigate their grief^[16]:

Confusion	Guilt	Sense of acceptance
Defensiveness	Numbness	Shame
Depressed	Pining	Stigmatized
Despair	Rejection	Suicidal thoughts
Fear	Relief	Questioning



Reflection corner :

How has the loss affected me emotionally? The first step toward healing is to acknowledge and understand the emotions that arise. Try asking yourself: *What emotions come up most often? In what situations?* If it feels too heavy, it's okay to take a break. The section “How to Navigate Emotional and Mental turmoil?” may help you find calm when things feel overwhelming.

How has it affected my thoughts?

*There were two things that really troubled my mind at the time. First, **there were days when I genuinely forgot that he was gone.** Without realizing it, I would still wait for his usual phone calls. Thoughts of him would suddenly appear and stop me in my tracks. Second, **it felt like I had lost a part of myself.** We always spoke in a foreign language, and after he passed, it was as if I lost my ability to understand that language. When I heard it on TV or from other people, their voices would slowly fade. I went blank—like I had suddenly gone deaf, unable to hear or comprehend anymore. Maybe it was my mind's way of protecting me from pain.*

Eventually, I decided to seek help from a psychiatrist recommended by a relative. Slowly, I also began opening up more to that relative—something that used to feel very difficult because I was afraid of being a burden. But through that, I found a sense of relief.

– A grieving partner



Loss can affect our thoughts in unexpected ways, as illustrated in the story above. Some experiences that may occur include^[17]:



Experiencing Flashbacks: Thoughts of the person who passed may appear suddenly, making it hard to concentrate.



Difficulty Remembering: Certain memories may feel blurry or seem to disappear. This could be the mind's way of protecting itself from pain.



Persistent Questions: Searching for answers about the loss is part of trying to make sense of grief. But remember—not everything has a clear answer, and that's okay.



Lingering Worries: You might fear another loss or feel anxious when forming new relationships.



Reflection corner:

How has this loss affected my thoughts? Write down any recurring thoughts you've been experiencing, and explore ways to manage them.

How has my body changed after the loss?

*I became more physically sensitive after the loss—more prone to psychosomatic symptoms. **Vertigo, which I rarely experienced before, suddenly came back and left me bedridden for several days.** Maybe my mind was still trying to process everything while I was also pushing myself to keep up with work demands. It felt overwhelming. What made it even harder was not being able to easily tell my clients that I needed time off for personal reasons. So, I had to keep working while grieving. It was exhausting.*

*Eventually, I decided to speak with a psychologist and spend more time with my closest friends. Their support felt incredibly valuable. Usually, when we met, we would reminisce about the beautiful memories we had with the person who passed. **Sharing those moments really helped me in my healing process.***

– A grieving friend



Just like the survivor above, some physical changes that may occur include^[17]:



Sleep Issues: Trouble sleeping, insomnia, or sleeping too much can be part of the body's response to grief.



Changes in Appetite: Some people lose their appetite, while others may eat more to cope with stress.



Fatigue and Low Energy: A persistent sense of exhaustion can linger, even if you're getting enough rest.



Increased Stress Hormones: Intense grief can raise stress hormones like cortisol, which can affect the heart, immune system, and overall physical well-being.



Digestive Issues or Physical Pain: Emotional stress may show up in the form of digestive problems, headaches, or muscle aches.



Tips from survivors:

Remember, **taking care of yourself doesn't mean ignoring your grief**—it's a way to slowly regain strength.



Reflection corner :

What changes have I noticed in my physical health since this loss? Pay

attention to your eating, sleeping, and energy patterns. Have there been changes lasting for some time? These are normal in early grief, but it's important to care for your health. Try choosing one small activity each day to support your physical recovery.

Can my mental health be affected?

It felt like a deep wound, and even though I wanted to stop crying, it felt impossible. Everything happened so suddenly, and she left without saying goodbye. I didn't know there were psychological support services at my university, so I just kept trying to complete my assignments, even though it was so hard.

*Perhaps the seeds of depression were already there... and this loss became the trigger. What made it harder was being far from my family and the support system I usually relied on. **My mental health worsened, and the desire to end my life felt very real.** But I'm deeply grateful to have a supportive family. When I couldn't reach out for help myself, they extended their hands and brought me to a professional. That step saved my life."*

- A grieving friend



Loss can place immense pressure on our mental health and may lead to the following risks^[17]:

- **Onset of Mental Health Conditions:** Grief can trigger conditions such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, or psychosomatic symptoms.
- **Feelings of Hopelessness or Suicidal Thoughts:** Some survivors may feel the urge to end their life—either to be with the person they lost or because the pain feels unbearable.
- **Worsening of Existing Conditions:** If you have a history of mental health challenges, this loss may intensify those struggles.

If you're going through something similar, consider reaching out for professional help. You can also explore the section "How Can I Take Care of My Health?" to find recovery strategies shared by fellow survivors.



Reflection corner :

How has this loss affected my mental health? Also think about activities that may help improve your emotional well-being and bring a sense of balance.

Can my relationships be affected?

*After losing my husband, I completely withdrew from others. It felt too heavy to be around people because I believed I was the one who needed support. I felt lost and didn't know what to do. At the same time, **my relationship with my mother-in-law deteriorated. We blamed each other, trapped in our own pain.***

This lasted for years until one day, while praying, I realized that even though I lost my husband, my mother-in-law had also lost her son. Although my heart was still hurting at that time, I went to her and said, 'I didn't want this to happen either, Mom. I truly don't know what to do. I'm sorry.' From that moment, we slowly began to understand that our grief was different, but both were real. And though it's far from perfect, we've started learning how to support each other.

- A grieving partner



Grief can shift the dynamics of our relationships with family and friends. Some possible changes include^[17]:

Needing some alone time



- Feeling too exhausted or emotionally fragile to interact with others.
- Seeking solitude to understand and process the grief.
- Avoiding places or activities that strongly remind you of the person who passed.

Feeling isolated or misunderstood



- Facing stigma or insensitive remarks from people who may not truly understand your loss.
- Feeling alone, even when surrounded by others, because you don't know who to turn to.

Changes in Family or Friend Dynamics



- Shifts in family roles, communication, or closeness.
- Distance or conflict with those who grieve differently
- Loneliness as others begin to move on while you are still grieving
- Fear of burdening others by opening up, or frustration from feeling unable to support other grieving loved ones.

Unexpected Sources of Support



- Some survivors find strength in people they weren't previously close to.
- Opening up can ease feelings of isolation and bring unexpected relief.



Reflection corner :

How has this loss affected my relationships with others? What changes have you noticed—in yourself or in others? Write down any forms of social support that are still available to you today.

Tips from survivors:



"I often ask myself, does this alone time bring me peace? If it does, that's okay. But if it makes the loneliness worse, then maybe it's time to talk to someone I trust or seek professional support."

How has this loss impacted me spiritually?

*Before I lost my father, I was someone who prayed regularly. I always asked for God's protection and prayed that my family would be kept safe. But my prayers didn't match what happened in reality. When I heard that my father chose to end his life, it felt like my entire world collapsed. I kept asking, 'How could God let this happen to me?' That question kept echoing in my head. I lost trust in God and became afraid to pray. **I even stopped praying altogether, because after all the prayers I had said, I still received such a heavy test.***

I stayed in that place for years—until one day, I overheard someone reciting a series of prayers on the street. I looked them up online and suddenly started crying. My heart felt warm and filled with longing. I realized I had wandered too far. From that moment, I slowly began to put myself back together and found my way again, step by step. Even though I still haven't prayed as frequently as before, I've found peace in it once more.

– A grieving daughter



This story shows that our relationship with God can be shaken when faced with deep grief. But for some survivors, **the spiritual journey becomes a space to gently rediscover hope**—at their own pace and in ways that feel right for them. Some things that you might be feeling^[17]:



Anger or Doubt Toward God: Some survivors have felt anger toward God. This isn't a sign of weak faith—it reflects the depth of their sorrow. In time, some find comfort when they begin to reopen that space for connection with God, without pressure.



Distancing from Worship: Sometimes, religious practices can feel heavy or lose their meaning. But when survivors return in their own time, these practices can become safe spaces to cry, reflect, and slowly find peace.



Worry About the Person Who Passed: Wondering about a loved one's fate in the afterlife is common. You're not alone—and those feelings are valid.



Honoring Your Own Journey: A spiritual path is a process. Making space for your questions, doubts, and emptiness can be the first step toward rediscovering meaning.



Reflection corner :

How has this loss affected my faith or relationship with God? You might also reflect on spiritual or religious activities that could help you feel more at peace and reconnected on a deeper level.

What is the grieving process like?

*Some theories speak of five stages of grief... denial, anger, and so on. Maybe there's some truth to that. But for me, the pain never really went away. **The wound is still there—still open. But at least now, I know how to care for it, to keep it from hurting more, so I can keep moving forward.***

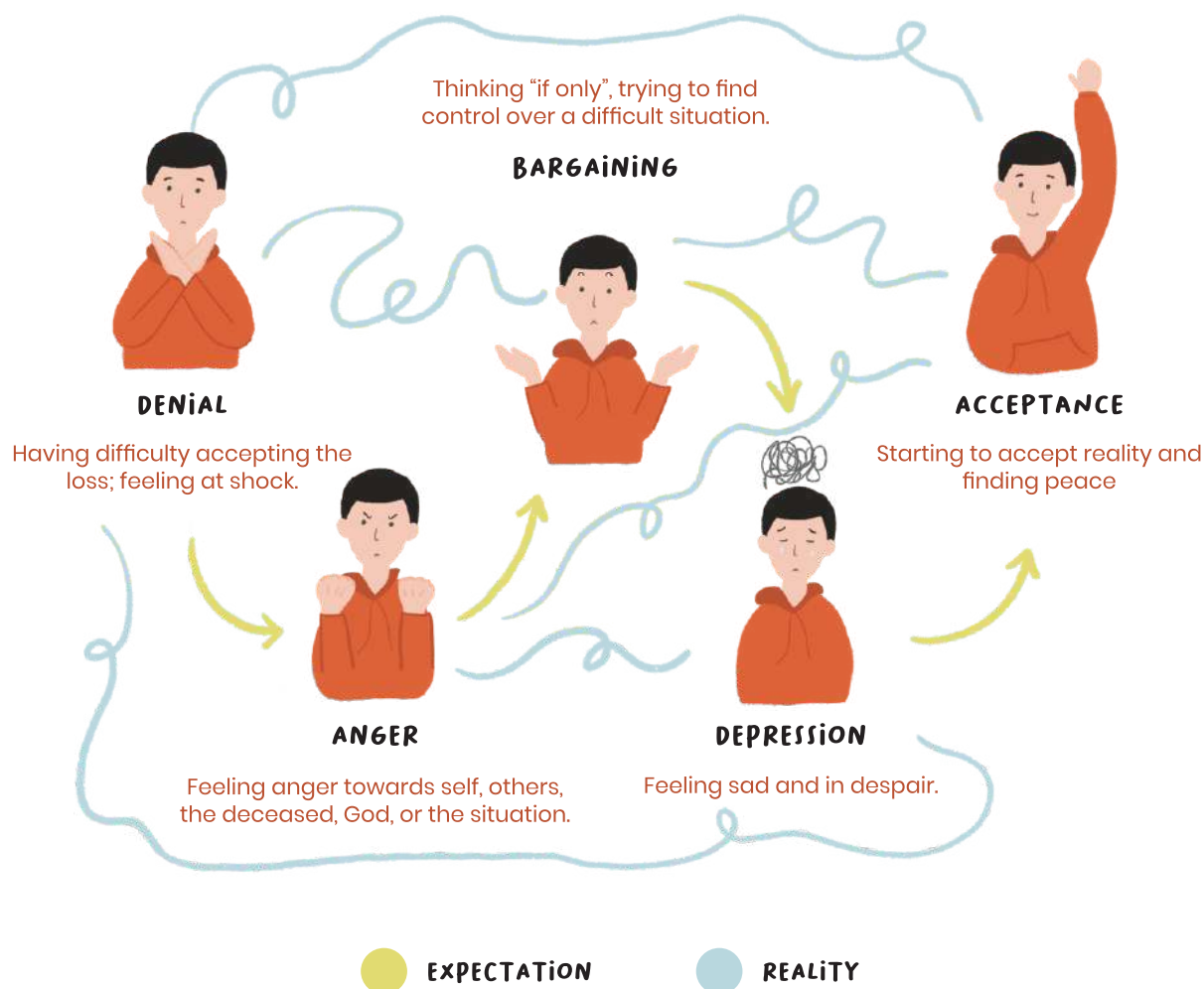
*I've learned how to survive. Not to be completely "healed," but to keep myself from drowning. My goal now is simple: if I can get up and face tomorrow, that's enough. It feels like I'm living in survival mode... but what else can I do? As humans, we will always face ups and downs. And even when it's hard, I know I need to keep going—because **every small step, no matter how tiny, is still a step forward.***

– A grieving friend



- **The grieving process isn't always linear.** From our conversations with survivors, the stages of grief don't always follow a clear sequence—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance^[18].
- **There are days that feel lighter, and days that feel heavy again—**sometimes without any clear reason. This happens to people who are newly bereaved and even to those who've carried the loss for years. Special days often stir strong waves of emotion, and that's a natural part of grieving.

The image below reflects this complexity:



How will I know that I've recovered?

*I don't want to be 'healed'—because **healed sounds like I'm no longer grieving**. And if I'm no longer grieving, it feels like I'm denying that my child ever existed. This sadness exists because he once lived, because he was once part of my everyday life. So **it's not the grief that I want to get rid of. I just want to be able to function again.***

*I've realized that the wound is slowly closing and forming a scar. A scar means new tissue has grown. I want that tissue to be stronger—but the scar will always be there. It's like, 'Yes, this is the scar.' And I don't want to erase it, as if none of this ever happened. What I long for isn't 'healing' in the sense of erasing everything. I just want to live again. I **want to find a way to***

keep going—without letting go of what once was. Because this experience will always be a part of me...

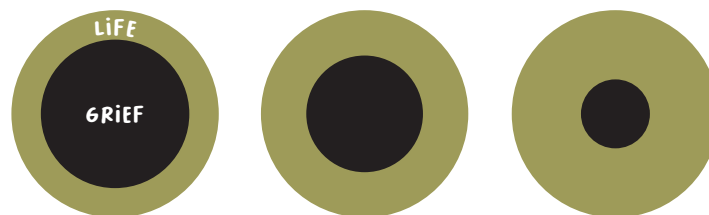
– A grieving mother



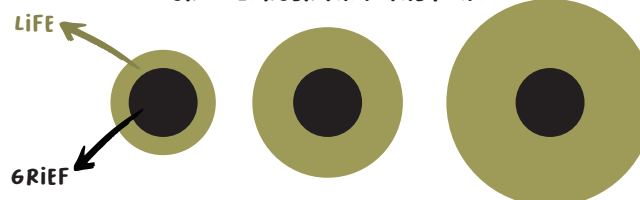
- **Healing doesn't mean erasing the pain or being completely free from grief.** What matters is how we learn to grow alongside the loss. How the wound becomes a space to learn about love, resilience, and meaning^[19].
- In time, we may learn to remember with more gentleness—and find a way to make peace, without denying what (or who) once meant so much to us.

GROWING AROUND GRIEF
(Adapted from Tonkin, 1996)^[15]

EXPECTATION: GRIEF FADES OVER TIME



REALITY: GRIEF STAYS THE SAME, BUT WE GRADUALLY GROW LARGER THAN THE PAIN



Reflection corner:

What does healing mean to me? Healing looks different for everyone.

Take a moment to reflect on the following:

- What does *your* version of healing look like?
- What moments have brought you a sense of relief or helped you view your loss with more softness?
- What kind of support do you need to help you move toward that place?

“Grieving after a loss—especially by suicide—is completely natural. We may never be ‘healed’ in the sense that we’re never triggered again, but we can heal and learn how to respond when those emotions return.”

– Meryl, survivor



*“In the end, life must go on. As Lois Tonkin once said—and as written in this booklet—grief doesn’t shrink. It stays the same size. But our life grows around it. **So keep walking...**”*

– A survivor



Navigating Personal Changes



Everyone finds their strength in their own unique way. Every small step toward healing is a victory.

Navigating Personal Changes

*"I believe everyone has their own way of healing. For me, **it all began with awareness**—awareness of my current state, and of my own limitations. From there, I learned that healing strategies can take many forms. What matters most is learning to listen to your inner needs—and respecting that this journey is deeply personal."*

There are times when we can rely on ourselves. In my case, writing and drawing became safe spaces that helped me process the overwhelming emotions I was feeling. I once wrote a letter to my late sibling—pouring out everything I never got to say. Drawing, writing, or even listening to guided meditations gave me room to breathe, even if just for a moment. But I also learned that sometimes I couldn't do it alone. When I realized that writing wasn't enough to untangle everything in my mind, I knew I needed help from others. I began opening up, and when the time felt right, I sought professional support.

*From that, I learned that healing strategies can take many different forms. What matters most is **learning to listen to our inner needs—and honoring the deeply personal nature of this journey.***

– A grieving sibling



- This section shares strategies drawn from the experiences of survivors and professionals.
- There's no one-size-fits-all approach—**feel free to explore what feels safe and right for you.**
- For a complete list, see the [Self-Healing Strategy Matrix](#), which summarizes all strategies shared during the interviews.

How to navigate emotional and mental turmoil?

Journaling:

- Choose the form of journaling that suits you best: daily entries, gratitude journaling, or writing letters to the person you lost.
- Use writing as a safe space to explore and express your feelings honestly.
- Try writing down one thing you're grateful for each day—even in grief, this can help open space for hope.
- Use the *Reflection Corners* in this book as a guide to start writing and reconnecting with your inner needs.

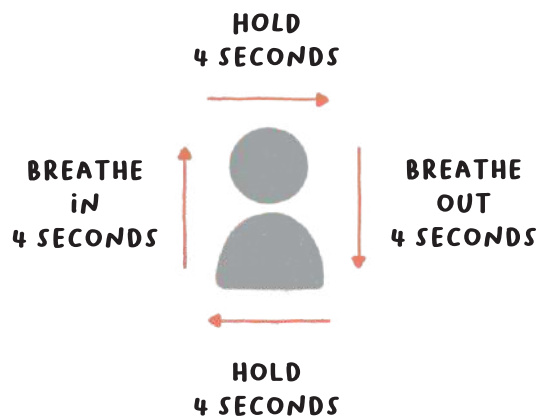
Want to know more?

- [Journaling Prompts](#)



Meditation:

- Start with simple techniques like **box breathing** (see illustration).
- If strong emotions arise or it feels difficult, that's okay—it's a natural part of the process.
- Try guided meditations through apps or videos if that feels more comfortable.
- Set aside a few minutes each day to be fully present and give yourself space to breathe.



Want to know more?

Useful meditation app:

- [Riliv](#)
- [Insight Timer](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [The Mindfulness App](#)



Creative Expression:

- Use whichever medium you enjoy most: painting, drawing, writing poetry, playing music, photography, etc.
- Focus on the process, not the final product.
- Let your creative work reflect your emotions and your journey.



Reflection corner :

If you could express your grief through art, what shape or color would it take? Reflect on:

- Why did I choose this shape/color/tone?
- What does this creation mean to my grieving process?
- What would I like to do with this image—and how might I feel doing that?

You're free to express these feelings through music, photos, poetry, or any other creative form that speaks to you.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for a person to draw or write their reflection on the prompts provided.

Want to know more?

- [Art Therapy Exercises For Grief Recovery](#)
- Into The Light Indonesia: [Contoh Galeri Seni Virtual Penyintas Kehilangan Bunuh Diri](#)



Spiritual Activities:

- For some survivors, spiritual practices become an important part of the healing journey.
- Dhikr, prayer, or other forms of worship often bring a sense of peace similar to meditation.
- If you feel connected to such practices, try to make space for them—no matter how small. Allow yourself moments of stillness, and give your soul room to breathe.

*I feel like spirituality became a crucial part of my healing process. If I hadn't prayed—whether it was through salah or dhikr—my condition might've been worse back then. **When it feels like no one else truly understands what we're feeling, where else can we turn if not to God?** I felt I could say everything to God without fear of being judged. Even though I didn't think of worship as a form of meditation at the time, I guess it could be seen that way too. Whatever our faith may be, praying to God can be a powerful form of self-healing.*

- A grieving friend



How to cope with guilt or anger?

Understand That Not Everything Can Be Controlled

- The person's decision may have come from pain that wasn't visible.
- Even trained professionals can miss the signs.
- This isn't because you didn't try or love them enough.



Write and Release Exercise

- Write down everything that makes you feel angry or guilty on a piece of paper.
- Tear the paper.
- As you throw it away or safely burn it, say softly:
"With this paper, I release these heavy feelings."



Symbolic writing and release can help lighten emotional burdens and create space for healing.



Reflection corner :

Imagine someone you care about is going through exactly what you're feeling right now. What would you say to comfort them? Write those words—then read them back to yourself, and allow yourself to receive those words as if they were meant for you.

Tips from survivors:



"Remember not to blame yourself too much. We can never truly read someone's mind, even if they're a sibling or close friend... This wasn't your fault."

How can I take care of my health?

1. Recognize the changes

- You can use the Reflection Corner in the chapter “*Understanding Suicide Loss*” to help identify changes.
- Notice what has shifted since the loss—physically, emotionally, or mentally.

2. Create a safety and care plan

- Some days may feel especially heavy—like the deceased’s birthday or anniversaries.
- Prepare a simple plan for those days: recognize potential triggers, list who you can reach out to, and note the steps you can take.
- Helpful guides that you could use:
 - EHFA.ID: [Safety plan](#)
 - EHFA.ID: [Self-care plan](#)



Tips from survivors:

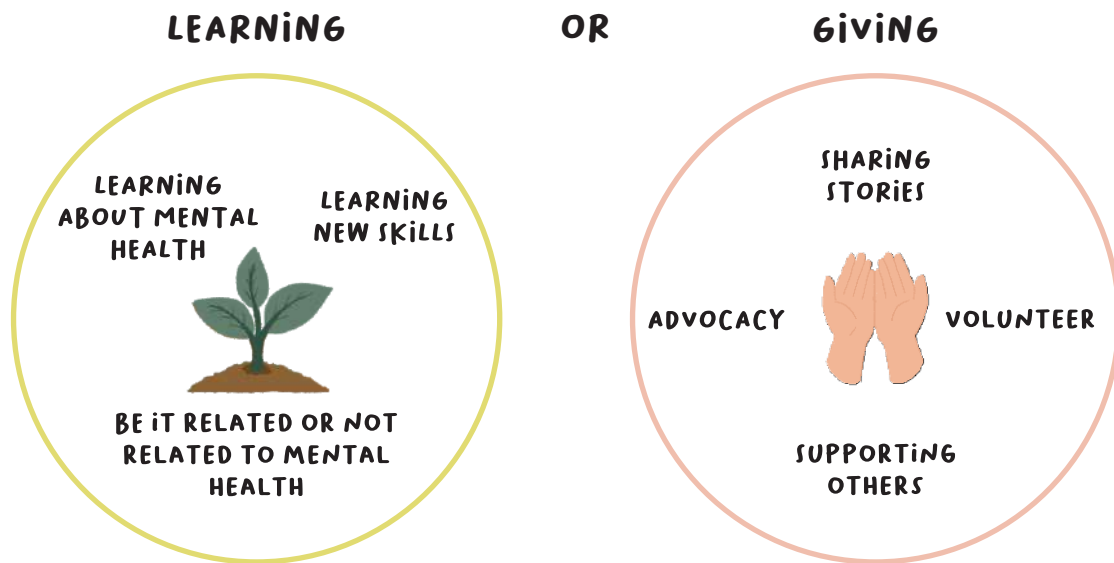
“I know the deceased’s birthday is always a difficult day for me. So, I plan ahead with a friend who can be there for me. That way, I know I won’t be alone, and someone will be checking in on me.”

3. Do one activity to care for your body

- Choose one simple activity each day to care for your body and give your mind some space, such as:
 - Exercise
 - Mindfulness
 - Walking in nature
 - Yoga
 - Gardening
 - Making art outdoors
- Physical activity and relaxation have been shown to reduce emotional distress and improve well-being during grief^[20-23].

4. Find activities that empower you

- Rebuilding a sense of meaning can become a small light in the healing journey^[24].
- Look for activities that make you feel like you're growing or doing something meaningful—even the smallest steps count.
- Many survivors find comfort in engaging with activities that help them learn something new or support others.



Every small step is proof that you're moving forward. And from there, hope can slowly begin to grow again.



Reflection corner :

Looking Back: Are there particular days that have felt especially difficult for you?

Looking Forward: What small things can you do to make those days feel a little lighter? Who can you reach out to, and what activities might help you feel just a bit better?

It is not your fault (or even theirs), don't carry the guilt for too long that you forgot to live your life. They wouldn't want that for you. It will be or feel okay eventually, we'll learn to live with this loss.

- Joanna Dorothy



*"Losing someone to suicide once made me live in a constant feeling of failure and made me feel at odds with my own dreams. But I truly believe that being in such a broken state would only bring sadness to the one I lost. Turning grief into a motivation to grow might feel impossible when the loss is still fresh. But it's the best choice we can make—and it is possible when we're ready. **Every moment of growth can be shared with the person we lost, through our hearts and thoughts.** For me, there's an overwhelming sense of pride every time I reach one of those moments."*

- Survivor



Navigating Social Changes



*In our relationships with others, sometimes
we find a mirror—a way to reflect and
rediscover our inner strength.*

Navigating Social Changes

*When I first started opening up to close friends, I hoped for support. But some responded by condemning the person I lost—calling what he did a major sin, even saying we wouldn't meet again in the afterlife. It was incredibly painful, because I knew who he was—a kind and intelligent person. **The stigma in Indonesia is heavy—not just for those who have passed, but also for the families they leave behind.** There's a sense of blame, as if we failed them. That experience made me withdraw for a long time.*

Eventually, I sought help from a psychiatrist and began to feel more at peace. I learned that not everyone will understand—but that doesn't mean there's no support at all. Slowly, I found strength—within myself and in the people who truly showed up from the beginning.

*Now, I'm more open. I no longer force myself to maintain relationships that no longer feel healthy. **Let people think what they want. From all this, I've learned who truly cares and deserves to be in my life.***

- A grieving partner



- Opening up after loss isn't always easy, and not everyone will respond with empathy.
- Over time, some survivors find the courage to share with people who can be present without judgment.
- This chapter explores how survivors navigate social changes after loss.

How can I start opening up to others?

Before Sharing^[25]:

- **Think about what you're hoping for**—do you want to be heard, receive advice, or simply be accompanied in silence? Communicate this with the person you're speaking to.
- **Start with someone you trust.** Even one person who truly listens can make a big difference.
- It's okay to start small. You don't have to tell everything all at once—**take it at your own pace.**



Reflection corner :

Think of three people in your life who feel safe enough to talk to. Write down:

- Who are they?
- What makes me feel comfortable sharing with them?
- If I were to choose just one of them, what would I want to say?

During or After Sharing:

- **Pay attention to their response.** Did you feel supported and not judged? If not, remember—you may have not found the right person yet, but that doesn't mean no one will understand.
- **Reflect on how you felt after opening up.** Did you feel relieved, supported, or maybe just emotionally tired?
- **Thank yourself for taking a brave step.** Sharing is never easy, and every attempt matters.



Tips from survivors:

"When I'm unsure, I try to test the waters by bringing up suicide in a general way during a conversation. If they seem open and comfortable discussing it, that gives me a sense of whether it's safe to share my own experience."

Who can I talk to?

Family and Friends



- Often the first place we turn to, since they know both you and the person you lost.
- Can be a source of comfort if both sides are open to listening and supporting one another.
- However, they may also be grieving and not yet ready to hear your story.
- Share your needs and boundaries gently and honestly.

Professionals



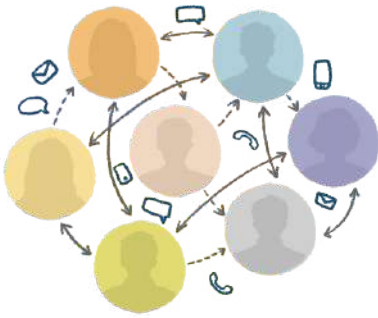
- Psychologists, psychiatrists, or counselors are trained to provide non-judgmental support.
- They can help you process emotions in a healthy and constructive way.
- These services can be accessed for free through BPJS ([click here to learn how to consult](#)).

Community-Based Support Providers



- Can offer emotional or spiritual support aligned with your cultural and personal values.
- Religious leaders, community figures, or village health workers may be meaningful alternatives.
- Choose someone who provides a safe and empathetic space.

Online Support Communities



- Can create a sense of connection and understanding.
- But take care not to overwhelm yourself—limit exposure if you're feeling emotionally vulnerable.
- Reading stories from other survivors can offer strength and inspiration.
- Not all responses on social media will meet your expectations—choose spaces that feel safe and supportive.



Online Communities You Can Reach Out To

- Into The Light (<https://www.intothelightid.org>)
- Bali Bersama Bisa (<https://balibersamabisa.org>)
- Survivors of loved ones to suicide (Komunitas global) (<https://www.facebook.com/SolosSurvivorsOfLovedOnesToSuicide/>)

Tips from survivors:



- Listen to your own needs—pause if it feels too overwhelming.
- Keep the contact information of someone you trust nearby in case you need support.
- Use a separate account or limit the reach of your posts if needed.
- Choose platforms that are survivor-friendly and emotionally safe.



How can I cope with stigma?

I had already opened up to those closest to me, but I felt this grief needed to be addressed professionally. When I sought help from a health service, someone responded with, 'Have you tried praying?' That really upset me.

*While I do believe prayer helps, it was the way they said it that made me angry. Fortunately, a friend encouraged me to seek help elsewhere. At the next place, I met a professional who truly understood my situation—and that's when my healing process truly began. I've learned that **seeking help can involve trial and error, but that doesn't mean the right help isn't out there.***

- A grieving friend



Suicide often triggers a lot of opinions, especially online. In that space, we have no control—and the comments can be incredibly hurtful. When I come across things like that, I try to offer a different perspective—even though it's not easy. Many people think suicide is selfish or defies God's plan. But as someone who lost a family member to suicide, I don't believe any human being can truly defy God's will.

*They don't know what we've been through. Sometimes, **offering a bit of insight or educating others can bring a sense of relief.** Like a small light in my own grieving process.*

- A grieving daughter



Stigma around suicide and the grief that follows can make the healing journey even harder. But it's important to remember—you are not alone, and there are small steps that can help^[26]:

- **Educate yourself and others**

Learning the facts about suicide can help you see the situation more clearly and reduce common misunderstandings.

- **Share your story when it feels safe**

Only share your experience when you feel ready. You have the right to choose when, with whom, and how much you want to share. Sharing with care can help reduce stigma and foster understanding.

- **Build a healthy and supportive network**

Finding people who genuinely care can take time. Don't lose hope if your first efforts don't work out—many survivors find the right support only after several attempts.

- **Be gentle with yourself**

Listen to your needs, and allow yourself to heal with kindness.

How to deal with media attention?

- For some survivors, their loss becomes a public matter. This can be especially difficult if the coverage feels insensitive—even though ethical guidelines are supposed to be followed.
- Remember: You are *not* obligated to respond to anything that makes you uncomfortable. You have the right to protect your personal space and share your story only when you feel ready.



A few things that may help^[27]:

- **Know your rights and boundaries:** You have the right to decline interviews or only share what feels safe.
- **Understand ethical reporting guidelines:** Learn how suicide should be covered responsibly by the media.
- **Recognize the role of journalists:** They work professionally—not as friends or counselors. Keep in mind your views may be edited or presented alongside the journalist's perspective.
- **Protect yourself from social media:** If needed, take a break. Some survivors find peace by stepping away from emotionally triggering content.
- **Bring a support person:** If you must engage with the media, consider having a trusted companion by your side.

Tips from survivors:



"Sometimes, taking a break from social media helps me breathe. No notifications, no painful reminders—just space to heal."



Want to know more?

- Into The Light: [Suicide Reporting Guideline](#)
- Survivor blog: [Media and us](#)



When should I seek professional help?

*When emotions and thoughts become too intense, it's important to recognize when it's time to seek help. The challenge is knowing where that line is—**when feelings start to suffocate you, when thoughts become too heavy to carry alone.***

Each person has a different threshold. For some, it may show up as persistent suicidal thoughts. For others, it may be a deep sadness that leads to loss of interest, irritability, or strained relationships.

When daily functioning is disrupted—loss of appetite, exhaustion, or an inability to carry out simple routines—**those are important signals.** When it feels like you can't cope on your own, it's time to seek professional help.

– Psychologist



When emotions become overwhelming and start to affect your health, seeking help isn't a weakness—it's a vital act of self-care. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Finding the right support may take time, and that's okay.
- Not every first experience will feel right.
- Many survivors try a few professionals before finding the right match.
- **The right help is out there—and you deserve to receive it.**



Tips from survivors:

"I really recommend seeing a mental health professional, if possible. Grieving feels like walking through a dark room trying to find your way out—bumping into things, unsure where to go. But seeing a professional is like being given a flashlight—not to push you in a certain direction, but to help you see the options more clearly."



Reflection corner:

Below are five indicators to help you reflect on your current state. Rate each from 1 (minimal) to 10 (maximum):



PRESSURE

How much pressure am I feeling right now?



NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

How intense are my negative emotions?



CONNECTION

How connected do I feel to those around me?



SELF-HARM THOUGHTS

How often do I have thoughts of harming myself?



ABILITY TO COPE

How confident do I feel in facing this on my own?

SCALE:

1-3 = LOW

4-6 = MODERATE

7-10 = HIGH

If your scores for pressure, negative emotions, and self-harm thoughts are high, and your scores for connection and ability to cope are low, please consider seeking professional help. You are not alone—there are people ready to listen and support you.

“For us to survive, cherish every moment we shared with them, celebrate their lives, and tell their stories. That’s what they would have wanted”

– Faris, survivor



“Seeking professional help isn’t a sign of weakness—it’s a sign of self-love. Don’t hesitate to reach out to a professional to strengthen your resilience.”

– Psychologist



Navigating Spiritual Changes



In the stillness of prayer, we often find a peace the world cannot offer.

Navigating Spiritual Changes

How can I reconnect spiritually?

*After the loss, my mind was a mess. I was filled with questions—Is my loved one at peace? Were they accepted by God? These thoughts were so overwhelming that I shut myself away for a month. Eventually, I sought guidance from a faith leader who patiently helped me explore answers from various scholars. Not all of them were comforting, but most shared the same message: **Heaven and hell are not ours to judge—what we can do is keep praying with sincerity.** From there, I began to learn how to let go of control and make peace with the questions I couldn't answer.*

– A grieving sibling



*I was once very angry with God. When I was invited to go on Umrah, I even 'challenged' God out of that anger. But while I was there, I felt embraced in the silence. Still, returning to regular worship wasn't easy. Bit by bit, I began reading the holy scriptures again. **Whenever I came across a verse that deeply moved me, I would pause and reflect on its meaning and how it related to my situation. Usually, if it stirred something strong in me, I knew there was a special message in it for me.***

– A grieving partner



These two stories remind us that **spiritual healing is a slow and deeply personal journey**. It doesn't come all at once, but unfolds over time—through small, meaningful steps.

What spiritual practices can help?

Spiritual activities don't have to be grand or perfect. For some survivors, it's the small acts that become turning points—brief moments that offer space to breathe, hope, and reconnect. Here are a few spiritual practices survivors have found helpful^[17]:

Reciting dhikr or mantras



- A source of strength and hope when the heart feels fragile.
- Provides a calming rhythm, much like positive affirmations.
- Opens space to speak with God or a higher power without fear of judgment.

Speaking with a faith leader



- A source of spiritual and social support.
- Helps explore answers to difficult spiritual questions.
- Offers broader perspectives from a religious viewpoint.

Reading sacred texts



- Provides stories and verses that inspire hope and resilience.
- A quiet way to reflect and feel spiritually accompanied.

Returning to regular worship



- A reminder that you still have something to hold on to.
- Offers “inner rest,” like meditation, amidst mental chaos.
- Brings daily structure when life feels directionless.

Participating in religious community activities

- Helps you reconnect socially.
- Activities like prayer circles, services, study groups, or acts of charity can bring new meaning after loss.

Listening to spiritual talks or music



- A gentle way to reconnect with your faith.
- Inspires and strengthens the heart, especially when you're not ready to speak or meet others.

Tips from survivors:



- Combining spiritual practices with personal reflection can help us feel more connected and discover new strength.
Along the way, you may hear many different views from religious leaders—but remember, you have the right to choose the ones that bring you comfort and align with what feels right for you.

Should I speak with a faith leader?

- If you feel uncomfortable discussing spiritual matters with a mental health professional, speaking with a trusted religious or spiritual leader can be a helpful first step in finding peace.
- They may help you see your situation from a broader, more compassionate perspective. Remember, actions like suicide are often deeply complex—not for us to judge.

Here are some forms of spiritual support that may be available:

Islam



- Speak with an *ustaz* or *ulama* to receive religious perspective and emotional support.
- Traditions such as *tahlilan* or group prayers can be meaningful ways to pray for the deceased and strengthen family bonds.

Christianity/Catholicism



- Speaking with a pastor or priest can include pastoral counseling and shared prayer.
- Memorial services may also offer spiritual comfort and strength.

Hinduism



- Consultations with a *pandita* or traditional leaders may help explain rituals such as *Ngaben* and their spiritual significance.

Buddhism



- Talking with a monk or Buddhist leader can provide guidance for prayers, meditation, or rituals for the deceased and their family.

Confucianism



- Confucian funeral ceremonies are often led by religious figures.
- Discussions with *xueshi*, *wenshi*, or *zhang lao* can help process grief through a spiritual lens.

Local Indigenous Beliefs or Traditions



- Speaking with community elders or spiritual leaders may help determine meaningful rituals and provide communal support.

On the other hand, if you feel more comfortable speaking with a professional, psychologists or counselors are also open to discussing spiritual matters. **Letting them know your comfort level from the beginning can help create a more supportive and respectful space.**

What if I'm not ready to return to spiritual practices?

- Not everyone feels ready to reengage in spiritual or religious activities right away.
 - Each person finds peace and meaning in their own way.
- Here are some alternative practices mentioned by survivors that may
- offer similar effects^[17]:

Purpose/Need	Spiritual Activity	Similar Alternatives
Providing positive affirmations	Reciting dhikr or mantras	Writing daily affirmations, gratitude journaling
Creating space for inner rest	Regular worship	Mindfulness meditation, yoga, light exercise, or morning walks
Finding strength through inspiring stories	Reading sacred texts	Reading reflective books, poetry, or inspirational stories aligned with personal values
Building meaningful connections	Participating in religious community activities	Joining hobby groups, volunteering, or survivor support groups
Gaining new perspectives	Speaking with a faith leader	Consulting with a professional or a trusted person

There is no single right way to heal. What matters most is **finding the path that feels right for you**—and allowing yourself to be accompanied in ways that feel most meaningful and supportive for your journey.



Reflection corner:

What spiritual or religious concerns/questions do I have? Where can I find answers to these questions?

Reflect on a prayer, verse, or religious story that touches your heart. Why does it leave a deep impression on you? Reflect on how it might relate to your current circumstances. Are there any lessons or insights you can draw from it?

*“Every human life and death is precious in God’s eyes. As people of faith, we are invited to trust that there is a beautiful purpose behind all sorrow and loss. **Our part is to keep walking—even through the darkest tunnels—until we find that small light ahead, leading us back to hope and healing.**”*

— Faith Leader



*“Focus on what you can control. Hope and resilience exist because you’ve made it through something difficult. You are worthy—so live your life fully. **You also deserve to be happy.**”*

— Survivor



The Many Faces of Loss



Loss is not about forgetting—it's about learning to live with a love that continues, even if in a different form.

The Many Faces of Loss

Losing a child

I lost one of my children. My world shattered—and my grief became public consumption. An 'expert' even spoke as if they knew my child, though they had never met our family. That was deeply painful.

*For me, **healing is a lifelong process.** We never return to who we were—**we are broken. But we can learn how to live again.** I'm grateful that God gently guided me to find a path that felt right for my healing. I sought professional help to understand what had happened and to ensure my other children received the protection they needed.*

*Learning about mental health helped me—not only to heal, but to fight the stigma. I also joined a survivor community. We support one another and celebrate the lives of our children. On their birthdays, we say: Happy Heavenly Birthday. I've also taken up photography. Through the lens, I search for symbols that remind me of my child... **I make sure he remain present in every step I take.***

– A grieving mother



For any parent, losing a child is an immeasurable wound. We imagine their future—school, career, marriage—and suddenly all of that vanishes. This grief is not just about the physical absence, but the loss of hope, identity, and the role of being a parent. Guilt, doubt, and regret often arise: “*What didn’t I do enough of?*” But it’s important to remember: **you did the best you could with what you knew at the time.**

*“As parents, **it’s only natural to want to protect our children, no matter their age...** to hope they’ll reach out when in pain, and to feel needed. So when a child dies by suicide, the most overwhelming feeling I had was that I had failed as a parent.”*

– Arkhama’s mother



Some parents find meaning through small steps—finding calm in daily routines, creating art in memory of their child, or honoring their life in meaningful ways. Learning about mental health can be part of that journey—not just to understand what happened, but to care for yourself and those still here.

Facing social stigma can add to the burden. But support from fellow survivors, faith communities, or understanding family members can ease the loneliness and give you strength. Remember: **you have the right to grieve in your own way and time.** And if the weight becomes too heavy, seeking professional help is not a sign of weakness—it’s an act of love, for yourself and for those still with you.

Want to know more?

- Survivor Story Blog: [“Conversations Left Unsaid”](#)
- Survivor Story Blog: [“Realizing We Never Fully Knew Our Child”](#)



Losing a parent

*I lost my father when I was very young. At the time, I didn't fully understand, but I overheard the truth from relatives who came to visit. After that, it was like an unspoken agreement—none of us ever talked about it again, and years went by in silence. I only truly felt the grief as a teenager. I **often wondered: Was I not enough for him to stay?** I became someone with very little self-confidence. My sadness turned into anger. At one point, I even thought my father was selfish.*

*I didn't have access to professional help and wasn't someone who found it easy to open up, so I sought my own way. I read about meditation and realized that prayer gave me a similar feeling—peaceful, reflective. While praying, I started talking to God, thinking things through. Over time, my perspective widened. I began to accept. But one thing I've learned: **if you have access and the means to seek professional help—use it. Sometimes, grief is too heavy to carry alone.***

– A grieving daughter



Losing a parent to suicide is a complex grief. For some children, it leaves haunting questions like: *Why? Was it my fault? Wasn't I enough?*

Grief can vary depending on our age at the time of loss—whether we were children, teens, or adults—but feelings of abandonment and guilt can arise at any stage. In trying to protect others, many families choose silence. Yet children often still find out, through other means. **Gently sharing the truth** with love and at the right time **can help them feel safe and respected.**

Feelings of anger, confusion, or even relief are not signs that you didn't love your parent. All those emotions are valid. What matters is remembering: **you are not responsible for their decision.**

Sadly, social stigma can make this kind of grief even heavier. People may make judgments or ask insensitive questions. But **suicide is a deeply complex event—not a reflection of your failure as a child.** You don't need to hide your story. You have the right to grieve. You have the right to speak about your loss.

If the emotions become too overwhelming, seeking professional help can be an act of bravery. Therapy can help untangle complicated grief and provide a safe space to breathe again. You may also find strength in the support of family, friends, or survivor communities.

Want to know more?

- [Communicating to children about grief and death](#)
- [The youngest griever: A guide for loss and life transition](#)
- [Growing around grief - Supporting children and young people affected by sudden loss or suicide](#)



Losing a partner

Losing my husband was something I never imagined. Our life together felt good—we were financially stable, and our relationship was warm. When he passed, I didn't have time to think about healing. I only knew one thing: I had to keep going—for our children and the people who worked under me. I kept moving forward, as if I could carry it all on my own.

*But the fear didn't end there. One day, I almost lost my child in the same way. We met with the school counselor, and that's when I was reminded: I needed to tend to my own wounds, too. **I began journaling—about my husband, my child, and all the feelings I had long buried. Through writing, I learned to feel again, to remember, and to let go.** As my emotions changed, the world around me began to shift as well. I became more connected to my child. We learned to open up, to grieve together, and to support each other.*

– A grieving spouse



Losing a partner to suicide is not only the loss of your closest companion, but also the loss of the future you once envisioned together. In the depths of grief, you may also face immense responsibilities—raising children, working, keeping the family running. It can all feel like too much, especially when you feel the need to hide your pain in order to appear “strong”.

Guilt, anger, or even a sense of betrayal may surface. There may be days when simply getting out of bed feels like a battle. For those with children, there might be hesitation in showing sadness—fearing it would burden them. But hiding your emotions can create distance. On the other hand, **opening up and sharing your grief with them can be a path toward shared healing.**

“Sometimes we forget—when we try too hard to look strong, our children feel like we’re not grieving with them.”

In addition to the loss itself, you may face shifts in relationships—perhaps with your partner’s family. If you feel distanced or blamed, remember: they too are grieving. Though difficult, with time and open communication, these relationships may find healing.

Seeking support is not a sign of weakness. Whether from friends, professionals, survivor communities, or reflective activities like writing—any of these can be part of your healing journey. There is no single right way—only small steps that feel true to your heart.

*Sometimes I say to myself, ‘**Today I remember you with tears, but someday I’ll remember you with laughter.**’ The bond still exists—it never truly ends. In time, God will replace sorrow with beautiful things, if we are willing to open our hearts to receive them.*

– A grieving spouse



Want to know more:

- AFSP: [Losing my husband to suicide – the first 2 years](#)



Losing a sibling

*My younger sibling passed away suddenly when our relationship was strained. It was a deeply traumatic and shocking experience. **I felt incredibly guilty for not being able to stop them or understand what they were going through.** Afterward, I shut myself off—feeling undeserving of laughter, feeling like I had failed as an older sibling. My relationship with our parents changed too, but we never spoke about it.*

*What slowly helped me recover was routine: returning to campus, reconnecting with friends. I realized I needed something to anchor my mind so I wouldn't be consumed by chaos. Writing and drawing became my way of untangling the knots in my thoughts. I also sought professional support when I needed it. In addition, I found peace in the spiritual experience during our religious ceremony. Through a spiritual medium, we were reassured that my sibling had transformed into another form of being, and that their time had truly come. For me, **healing came from many directions—from professional help, from within, and from spiritual belief.***

- A grieving sibling



Losing a sibling to suicide leaves a profound wound, often accompanied by feelings of responsibility, anger, and regret. Siblings are more than family—they're witnesses to your life's journey, sharing both joy and pain. When they're gone—especially if things were left unresolved—you can feel overwhelmed by countless "if onlys."

You might feel the need to stay strong for your parents, or fear burdening them with your grief. But **holding in your sorrow for too long can harm you.** It's okay to feel disappointed, angry, or confused—these are all expressions of love that had no chance to be spoken. Differences in how each family member grieves can create distance, but this isn't a failure—it's simply how each person copes in their own way.

Two weeks after my sibling passed, I found an online survivor community. **When I shared my story**, they received it with deep empathy. **It felt like... finally, I wasn't alone.** I also started therapy, which helped me untangle the guilt and complex emotions. Gradually, I could breathe easier—and feel peace again.

– A grieving sibling



Remember that **sibling relationships are complicated—love, conflict, and protectiveness often coexist.** Guilt or anger are natural feelings. Revisiting fond memories, writing a letter to your sibling, or joining a survivor support group can open space for healing. Don't hesitate to seek support from extended family, friends, or professionals when thoughts and feelings become too heavy to carry alone. You don't have to go through this on your own.

Want to know more?

- The compassionate friends: [When our sibling has died by suicide](#)



Losing friends

The deceased was a close friend of mine. When I heard the news of their passing, my heart shattered. At the time, I was out of town and didn't get the chance to see them one last time. Friends later told me that before they died, they had given away some of their belongings. We didn't realize—it was a sign of farewell. This loss triggered a major collapse in my mental health. I already had a history of mental health struggles, and their passing reignited suicidal thoughts.

*Through this journey, I learned that **healing can't rely on just one approach**. The pain of loss and my clinical condition required different strategies—**self-healing and professional support had to go hand in hand**. At times when I couldn't access help, I only had myself. But when I could no longer carry on alone, it was social support that kept me alive. Each part played a vital role—and they all complemented one another.*

– A grieving friend



Losing a friend to suicide often feels like a lightning strike on a clear day—sudden, confusing, and leaving behind invisible wounds. You may feel like your grief is “less valid” than that of a family member’s, or worry you don’t have the right to mourn because you’re not considered the closest person. But the truth is: **grief over losing a friend can be just as deep.**

Some people experience guilt, wondering whether they missed the signs or feel they failed as a friend. These emotions are entirely normal, and you are not alone in feeling them. Others may be surprised by how deeply the loss affected them, even if their relationship with the deceased wasn’t very close. This reminds us that grief isn’t defined by relationship status, but by the connection we felt and the meaning that person held in our life.

*I lost my friend during a hectic exam period, and I felt guilty for missing a message from him. His death triggered anxiety and depression in me. **In our culture, there's often pressure on men to always appear 'strong,'** but I chose to open up to my family—and their support meant a lot. I also took the initiative to seek professional help through the national health service (BPJS). That really helped, especially when combined with my own healing efforts.*

– A grieving friend



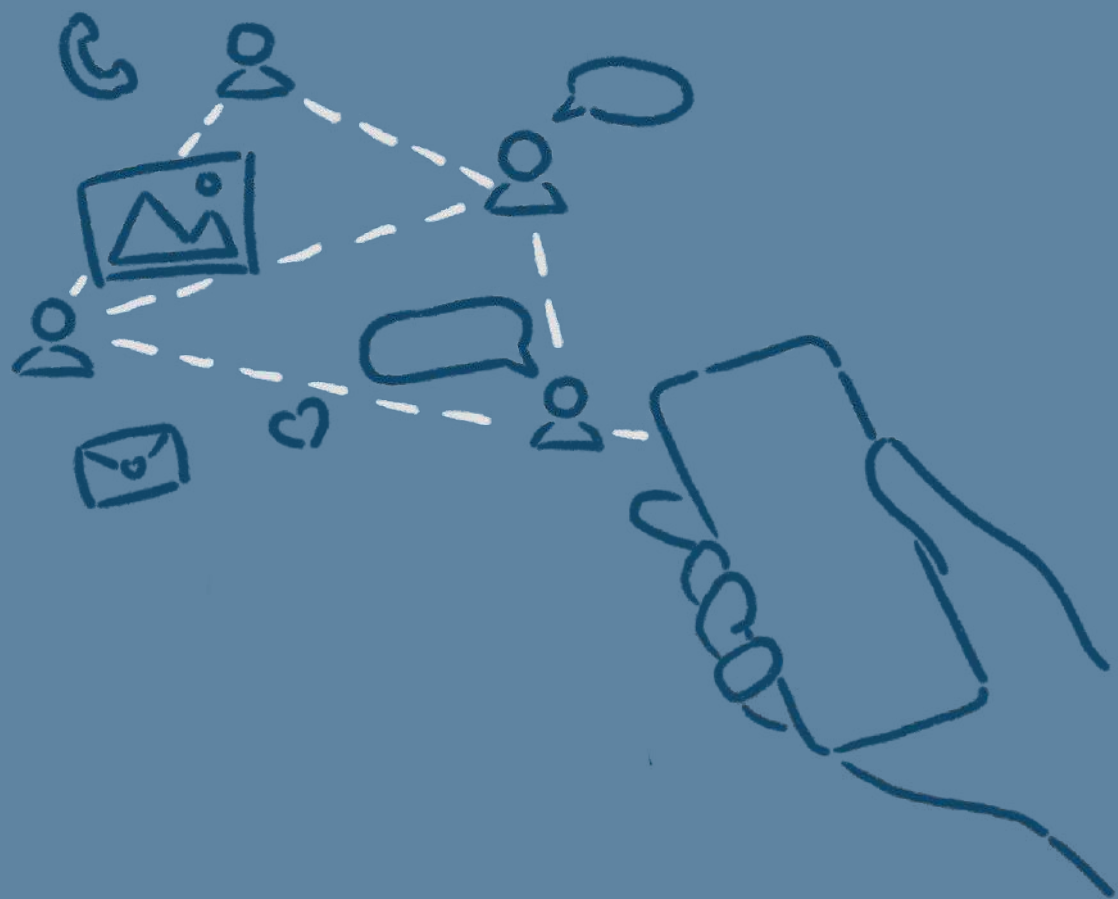
Grief over a friend's death is often overlooked by others, which can leave you feeling isolated. If that's what you're going through, seek out a safe space to share—whether with friends, support groups, or professionals. Honoring your friend, writing a letter to them, or celebrating the little things that remind you of them can gently begin to tend the wound. Give yourself permission to grieve, in whatever way feels right for you. **No grief is too small—every feeling deserves to be felt.**

Want to know more?

- Child Bereavement UK: [When a friend dies by suicide](#)



Resources and Helplines



*Seeking help is not a sign of weakness, but
rather the courage to take care of yourself and
find a path toward healing.*

Resources and Helplines

In Indonesia, a suicide management framework is still underway. The Health Minister has just released a hotline service to handle suicide issues. Those who are in need can contact them by phone call or through WhatsApp text. In addition, several non-government organizations also offer aid in the form of online/offline communities and educational articles. Below are gathered lists we can provide:

Government-led Hotline: Hotline 119 ext. 8 (<https://www.healing119.id>)

Community-based:

- Into the Light Indonesia: <https://www.intothelightid.org>
- Bali Bersama Bisa (provide BISA Helpline (formerly LISA), Bali-based): <https://www.bisahelpline.org>; wa.me/628113855472
- Inti Mata Jiwa (IMAJI) Gunung Kidul Non-Governmental Organization: <https://imaji.or.id>
- Survivors of The Lost Ones (SOLOS) on Facebook (English-based community)

Other Professional Help:

- Community health center's psychologists (Puskesmas)
- Brain gym practitioner
- Art therapist
- Licensed psychologist directory:
 - IPK: <https://data.ipkindonesia.or.id/cari-psikolog/>
 - HIMPSI: <https://himpsi.or.id/cari-psikolog>

Other Resources:

Resources on suicide prevention

- Center for Public Mental Health: [Suicide first aid guideline for Indonesia](#)
- Seribu Tujuan: <https://www.seributujuan.id/mencegahbunuhdiri>
- Ehfa.id: [Website for various psychological aids](#)

Resources according to developmental stage

- Global Protection Cluster: [How to communicate grief and loss with children](#)

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: [Children, Teen, and Suicide Loss](#)
- Dougy Center: [The youngest griever's: A guide for loss and life transition](#)
- South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network: [Growing around grief – Supporting children and young people affected by sudden loss or suicide](#)

Resources for suicide loss survivors in general

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: [Surviving a suicide loss: A resource and healing guide](#)
- American Association of Suicidality: [SOS Handbook](#)
- Department of Public Health England: [Help is at hand – Support after suicide](#)
- Indiana Suicide Prevention Network: [Help and hope for survivors of suicide loss](#)
- SAMH: [After a suicide](#)
- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide: [Support after suicide](#)
- Support After Suicide Partnership: [First Hand – Making sense of lasting memories and emotions after the suicide of someone you don't know](#)

Resources more focused on practical approach

- [Journaling Prompts](#)
- Cycle against suicide: [Life after suicide – A toolkit](#)
- South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network: [Growing around grief – A toolkit for people bereaved by suicide](#)
- British Columbia Ministry of Health: [Hope and healing: A practical guide for survivors of suicide](#)
- MH Commission of Canada: [Toolkit for people who have been impacted by a suicide loss](#)

Resources for others who help survivors

- South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network: [Growing around grief – Supporting someone impacted by suicide or sudden loss](#)

Resources for religious services

- SPRC: [After a suicide – Recommendation for religious services](#)

Moving Forward – Messages of Hope

Hi fellow survivors, reading this booklet brought tears to my eyes. Eighteen years ago, I never imagined I'd be sitting in front of a laptop, reading this booklet and writing this message... God took in an incredibly painful way, but He also gave back many times over—through good health, intelligent children, and an incredibly supportive circle of friends. There were times I wanted to give up and end it all, but I eventually came to one conclusion... As long as there is life, there is a fight to be had. Never give up—whatever doesn't kill you will make you stronger.

- With love, Alink, Survivor

Create a safe space where you can continue to talk about and understand your loved one, to preserve their memory, presence, and love in your life. This safe space can take any form—a private account, artwork, a journal, etc. Such a space helps free you from judgment, reactions, or criticism from others, offering you a peaceful place to process your grief.

- Survivor

"Where there is ruin, there is also hope for a treasure - Jalaluddin Rumi"

- Psychiatrist

Grief from loss leaves a deep mark on those left behind. The healing process can be winding and take time. But there is always hope that one day we can find a life purpose that would make our child proud. Don't hesitate to seek support through groups or professional help. Always remember to treat ourselves with kindness.

- Chandra, mother of Naman

I hope this booklet will ease your recovery journey, so that you don't feel alone in it

- Psychologist

You are not to blame for what happened. I know you might feel like you should have done more, but please remember, this isn't your fault.

- Sourvbites

The book "Healing After Loss" is very meaningful for all of us who have experienced grief and loss. This book can be a companion on our journey to process grief. Built from deep research, may it reach many readers—especially survivors and their families— and support us in recovering from grief.

- Faith Leader

Moving Forward – Messages of Hope

“After loss, sailing through a sea of emotions requires immense strength and resilience. Thank you for holding on until today. May your boat become lighter with time, and may you find hope in every wave you face.”

- Author

Grief from losing someone will come and return at unexpected times, and it may feel very hard to continue living. But no matter how hard it gets, you deserve to keep going and continue to live the life you have. You deserve to feel supported and loved.

-Survivor



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