



Grieving difficult situations

All death is hard to bear, but some losses are particularly difficult to come to terms with.

Grief can be overwhelming when you are mourning what seems like an unnatural loss, such as

- when someone is a victim of a crime or traumatic accident
- when someone dies by suicide
- when a parent dies unexpectedly
- when a sibling or friend dies young



I've learnt that it is not so much that the heart heals, but that we can grow the flesh around the wound, so that the broken part takes up less space and is comforted and nourished by being surrounded by a larger, functioning whole.

Cathy Rentzenbrink

It can be especially difficult to recover when someone you know is killed in a violent or traumatic way.

- You may feel shock or confusion about what has happened
- News and media coverage can be shocking and upsetting
- You may experience strong feelings of anger and a desire for revenge
- You are at risk of developing post traumatic stress disorder
- There may be a post-mortem and inquest which can delay your ability to move through the [stages of grief](#)

As well as experiencing shock or anger at the news that someone you know has died by suicide, you may

- struggle to accept that the person died by suicide
- feel anger at the person who died or at other people
- feel guilty or as though you could have done something to make a difference
- have to deal with insensitive and hurtful comments from others
- spend a lot of time trying to understand why the person died in this way

It's normal to experience very complicated emotions if someone you care about dies by suicide.

ASKING WHY

People who have been affected by suicide often want and struggle to understand why it happened. But there may not be an answer to this difficult question. Suicide may be associated with

- Mental illness, such as depression or schizophrenia
- Chronic pain
- Physical disability
- Stress of certain life events

As difficult as it is to accept, you may never truly understand why someone died by suicide.

FEELINGS OF GUILT

Lots of people feel guilt and blame after a loved one's death by suicide.

You may feel that you saw warning signs, that you should have seen the person more or that you could have done something to stop what happened.

You may feel angry at the person who died. You may feel that they should have 'kept fighting', that they betrayed you or failed you.

These are common, normal reactions to this trauma. But the reasons that someone dies by suicide are complex – **it is not your fault that they died.**

FEELINGS OF RELIEF

Some people who end their own lives were affected by mental illness, such as depression, schizophrenia or other conditions.

The suicide of a loved one can bring feelings of relief if that person was very ill, especially if they suffered great distress and torment.

Death and bereavement can bring a strange mixture of emotions. You shouldn't feel guilty about how you react.

OTHER PEOPLE'S REACTIONS

Despite lots of work to understand mental illness and suicide, it still carries stigma.

You may have to deal with people who respond poorly to your bereavement. Some people may judge the person who died, or may struggle to connect with you because they feel awkward about the cause of death.

It can really hurt to have people make callous or thoughtless comments in response to suicide. You may want to have a standard response to end conversations that cause you pain.

Losing a close family member is one of the worst things that can happen to you especially if the person died young or unexpectedly. It is a deeply hurtful, upsetting and traumatic experience that you may struggle to recover from. The intense grief you feel is a symptom of the deep and powerful love you have for the person who has died.

Cruse has some information to help you understand your feelings if

- [you've lost a parent](#)
- [you've lost a sibling](#)

SHARING AND REFLECTING

Everyone reacts differently to death, but it can hurt desperately to see the world move on when someone close to you has died. It can help to find ways to keep your parent or sibling's memory alive, whether that's through photographs, telling stories or fundraising in their memory.

Sharing your story and experience with people who've been through similar loss is important. These resources might help

- [The Good Grief Trust](#)
- [Winston's Wish](#)
- [Irish Hospice Foundation](#)

WAYS TO SUPPORT A BEREAVED SIBLING

If you have younger siblings, you can help them to understand and process their loss by

- Being honest with them about what has happened, paying attention to their age and their ability to understand death
- Allowing them time to talk about what has happened and to ask questions that may appear insensitive or difficult to answer
- Spending time with them doing normal things, if you feel up to this
- Allowing them to resume their normal life, while understanding that they need extra support to do this

BABY LOSS AND INFERTILITY

Losing a baby during pregnancy can be earth-shattering. Your loss can be lonely, particularly if it happened early in pregnancy or before you shared your news with others. Your sadness can be intensified by events that bring others enormous joy, such as pregnancy announcements, baby showers and birthday parties.

Talking about your experience will help. Finding people who share that sense of loss and unfairness can help you process your emotions and move through your grief. Specialist organisations can help you process the experience you have been through and have the expertise to help you tackle difficult and emotive questions, like how to talk to other

children about your loss and how to keep your baby's memory alive. Contact

- [Pregnancy and Infant Loss Ireland](#)
- [Sands](#)

Infertility brings its own special kind of grief. You will experience a cycle of hopes and disappointments, highs and lows. Some people choose to keep their infertility journeys private. You may feel superstitious or as though you'll be judged or pitied and this can make us frightened to share our true experiences. Specialist support organisations can help you express and process your grief. Contact

- [National Infertility Support and Information Group](#)
- [Fertility Network UK](#)

The passage of time may not be enough to get you through traumatic loss. Be gentle with yourself and use these tips to help you cope

- Give yourself time to come to terms with your loss
- Try not to deny your feelings
- Remember that grief is a normal reaction, even when your feelings seem too intense to be normal
- If friends seem awkward or don't know what to say, tell them what you need
- Accept that some friends won't be able to give you the kind of emotional support you need
- Consider joining a support group in your area
- Anticipate that important events, such as birthdays and Christmas, will provoke strong feelings
- Get help and support through professional bereavement counselling

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