

**RESOURCES**

**CWCC—(307) 237-9583**

**WBI—(307) 237-7444**

***Suicide Survivor's***

***Support Group***

**(307) 247-4726**

**NATRONA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**201 NORTH DAVID  
CASPER, WY 82601**

**307-235-9282**

**COPING  
WITH  
SUICIDE**



## **COPING WITH SUICIDE**

### **Beyond Surviving**

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. All that you are feeling is part of the normal grief reaction.

Suicide has a devastating effect on the partners, families and friends who remain. Not only do those who remain have to deal with the grief and shock that is natural when someone dies, they have many other feelings and emotions to work through.

Feelings of hurt, confusion, guilt, anger and remorse to name a few. There may be many unresolved issues to deal with. All of this and the stigma that surrounds suicide can make them feel isolated and unable to deal with their grief.

The stages of grief are the same for all, but each person experiences these stages in their own way. Shock is most certainly what you will feel initially. It is accompanied by disbelief and numbness. Denial can follow quickly, "It can't be", "I don't believe it." Bargaining is your promise that "I'll wake up and find this isn't happening." Guilt is painful and hard to deal with, This is a normal feeling. You may feel you should have seen it coming, or that you could have done more to prevent it. No one should feel responsible for someone else making the choice to take their own life. When someone is at the point of suicide, they are usually unable to think clearly and rationally. In some cases the suicide may not be unexpected. The person may have made repeated attempts or threats and their suffering may have been obvious. In such a case the suicide might bring you a sense of relief. Often there's a great deal of guilt associated with this relief.

Remember that it's normal to feel relieved when a difficult situation ends.

Anger is another big factor which seems to be necessary in order to face the reality of life and then to get beyond it. Anger is a natural stage through which we must pass. Denying your anger is far more damaging than letting yourself express it, but you need to find a way of doing so that is not self destructive.

Talking about it often helps, or you may find that physical activity helps you to release it.

Depression is a stage of grief that comes and goes. Knowing this, be prepared to give yourself time to heal. Anxiety and stress can be part of depression and you may feel panicky, have difficulty sleeping and concentrating. All these are normal reactions to grief.

Resignation is the late state. It comes when finally you accept the truth. Understand that you will never be the same but your life can go on to find meaning and purpose.

Often, when a death is caused by suicide, the pain of grieving is added to by the stigma attached to suicide. You may be unsure of what to tell people for fear that they'll judge you or the deceased. Remember, often people's discomfort with talking about a suicidal death is about death itself rather than how it occurred and they would react in a similar way if the death was due to illness

### **LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF**

You're in for a tough ride, and it's important to look after yourself. Spend time nurturing people and ensure you take time to yourself that you need.

Significant events such as birthdays, Christmas and anniversaries, and triggers such as smells, weather conditions and objects can stir intense feelings. Be prepared for these and have a plan for when you feel overwhelmed, call a friend or go for a walk.

At times, particularly in the first year or so, you may feel that you'll never recover. Any relief you get from grief will be short-lived and the pain never-ending. You WILL find however, that over time, the gaps of relief lengthen and the intensity of the pain diminishes.

Many people bereaved by suicide benefit from counseling. Some people may need one or two sessions, others need ongoing support. You may be able to access free or subsidized support through your local community health center. It may help to attend a support group to share your experience with other people bereaved by suicide.

Just as the reasons behind each suicide are unique, so too are the reactions and coping processes of those left behind.

### **BE KIND TO YOURSELF**

Be patient with yourself. Do not compare yourself to others. Go through the mourning process at your own pace.

Accept your feeling as part of the normal grief reaction.

Recognize that a bad day does not mean that all is lost.

Ask for and accept help, talk with others.

Exercise, physical activities will help relieve any stress or depression you feel.

Get plenty of rest.

Schedule activities to help you get through weekends and holidays.

Know that you will get through this.

Allow yourself to feel the pain and eventually you will realize you have begun to build a new life, How long you grieve for is not a measure of how much you loved the person who died.