



# Supporting someone bereaved by suicide



## About this leaflet

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This leaflet offers advice and guidance on how best to support someone who has been bereaved by suicide. At this time they are probably experiencing a range of emotions and have many unanswered questions.

It has two parts:

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### 1. Supporting those bereaved by suicide

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### 2. Self-care

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## 1. Supporting those bereaved by suicide

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If a suicide occurs in your community it can be difficult for everyone. Some people may be impacted more than others. It is important to support those in your community who are particularly affected by what has happened.

Keep an eye out for those who may be overlooked such as children, teenagers and those who may be isolated.

If you are unsure, take the time and reach out to the person and ask how you can support them.

Things which help include:

- Listening but more importantly, letting the person talk
- Helping with practical tasks
- Showing lots of love, kindness and support
- Be willing to talk about the person who has died



## What to say or not say

Be aware of how uncomfortable you feel, but don't let this stop you from reaching out to the person who is bereaved.

Here are some examples of things that you can say, and some things to avoid.

You can express your concern and compassion for the bereaved by saying things like, ***'I cannot even begin to imagine how it must be for you'*** or ***'I don't know what to say but I am here and I am willing to listen'***.

It's important not to minimise the person's loss or make a judgement on how the person might be feeling so try not to say things like, ***'Put it behind you and move on with your life'***, ***'I know how you are feeling'*** or ***'Time heals all wounds'***.

When someone dies by suicide, the support of friends, family and community is really important.

## You can provide practical and emotional support for the person who is bereaved by;

- Acknowledging what has happened and using the name of the person who has died
- Listening and allowing the person to express their grief in their own way
- Offering practical support, such as helping out with household, family or day-to-day tasks

## Try not to;

- Assume you know best or tell them what to feel
- Take over - sometimes the bereaved wish to remain involved in some activities or responsibilities
- Avoid them - they need your contact and support



### 3. Self-care

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It is important to remember that supporting others affected by suicide takes energy and can be demanding at times.

Practicing self-care not only allows us to help ourselves, but to help others as well.

Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health.

## Who to contact if you need urgent help

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Contact your GP, or an  
“out-of-hours” GP  
see [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

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Contact Samaritans 24/7  
on freephone 116 123,  
email [jo@samaritans.ie](mailto:jo@samaritans.ie) or  
text 087 2609090  
(standard message rates apply)

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Contact Pieta House 24/7 on  
freephone 1800 247 247 or  
text HELP to 51444  
(standard message rates apply)

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Go to, or contact, the  
Emergency Department of  
your nearest hospital  
see [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

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Call the emergency services on  
999 or 112

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If you are being supported by a mental  
health team, or have been in the past,  
contact the service for support in a crisis.

The **Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service** is a free, confidential service that provides assistance and support to families and individuals after the loss of a loved one to suicide

[www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie)

[www.vitahouse.org](http://www.vitahouse.org)

[www.thefamilycentre.com](http://www.thefamilycentre.com)

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For information, resources and tools to help and support someone who is bereaved, the grieving process and how to cope, contact **The Irish Hospice Foundation**

[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

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# your mental health.ie

Information | Support | Services

Visit [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie)  
for information and support  
services for your mental  
health and wellbeing.

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This leaflet is available to order on  
[www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie) and has  
been produced by;

**The National Office for Suicide Prevention**  
HSE Community Strategy and Planning  
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Tel: 01 620 1670 / E: [info@nosp.ie](mailto:info@nosp.ie)

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Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt

Building a  
Better Health  
Service