

ZERO SUICIDE IN TEXAS



October 2015



Supporting Families and Loved Ones

Unfortunately, the experience of losing someone we care about by suicide is all too common. Research suggests that over the course of the lifetime, 85% will lose someone they care about to suicide. The discovery of a loved one's completion of suicide is a shocking and difficult experience.

Individuals often feel guilt, anger, shame, fear, and self-blame.

Sometimes there are even feelings of relief after a protracted mental illness.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has developed a resource guide, entitled *Surviving a Suicide Loss: A Resource and Healing Guide*, that provides invaluable information for families

and friends of suicide loss survivors. The resource guide is formatted in a way that materials may also be shared as handouts provided by mental health professionals, support providers, and caring others.

Many survivors report that contact with others who have experienced loss by suicide is very helpful to them. Additional resources that may be beneficial include survivor support groups, contact by other survivors skilled at providing support (such as LOSS teams or AFSP survivor outreach), and electronic communication networks. Check the resources identified in the rest of the newsletter for more ideas.

Survivor Resources

- Surviving a Suicide Loss: A Resource and Healing Guide - https://www.afsp.org/content/download/2737/50333/file/resource_healing_guide.pdf
- Survivor Support Groups - <http://www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide-loss/find-support/find-a-support-group>
- LOSS Teams – <http://www.losssteam.com/>
- AFSP Survivor Outreach - <http://www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide-loss/find-support/survivor-outreach-program>
- AFSP E-Network - <http://www.afsp.org/coping-with-suicide-loss/where-do-i-begin/join-the-survivor-enetwork>

Look into These Resources

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The Journey: A Story of Hope and Healing

AFSP's documentary *The Journey* tells the stories of a diverse group of suicide loss survivors. It is a compelling film that shows how each survivor is weathering the loss of a loved one, and how they are finding their way back to a life rich in meaning – and even joy. View it at

<http://www.survivorday.org/survivor-day-documentaries/>

Family Journeys: Healing and Hope after a Suicide

This documentary will be screened on November 21st at local events. View the trailer at <http://www.survivorday.org/survivor-day-documentaries/>

Digital Memory Quilt

The digital memory quilt is an online space where suicide loss survivors can honor and share stories about their loved ones using video, audio, photos, and words – stories that serve as squares in a virtual quilt.

Find the quilt at

<http://www.survivorday.org/the-quilt/>

Upcoming Events



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

- November 21 will see survivors of suicide loss gathering to find comfort and gain understanding by sharing stories of healing and hope. The event was created by Congress in 1999 and is currently sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Find out more at the website <http://www.survivorday.org/>
- A list of events occurring in Texas can be found at <http://www.survivorday.org/survivor-day-events-by-state/texas/>
- For those unable to attend a local event, a live online event is occurring at <http://www.survivorday.org/survivor-day-live/>



What the data tells us



A recent U.S. online poll about mental health and suicide reported the following findings:

- 89% report that mental health and physical health are equally important to them, but 56% feel that physical health is treated as more important within our health care system.
- 92% of respondents believe that services that address mental health are fundamental to overall health and should be a part of a basic health care plan.
- 43% believe that seeing a mental health professional is something that most people cannot afford, 31% believe it isn't accessible for most people, and 30% believe most people don't know where to find mental health care
- One-third of respondents have ever been diagnosed with a mental health condition by a health care provider, while nearly half (47%) state they thought they might have a condition at some point.
- Depression and anxiety were the most commonly reported diagnoses.
- 38% of adults reported they had ever received treatment for a mental health condition. Talk therapy was the most common treatment (29%), followed by medication (25%).

Read more from this study at

<http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/sites/actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/files/Mental%20Health%20and%20Suicide%20Executive%20Summary%208%2027%2015%20%282%29.pdf>