



Suicide Postvention Information for Behavioral Health Professionals



Sometimes, as helpers, we think we shouldn't be affected by the loss of a person we've treated, provided services to, or had a helping relationship with. But we are human, and we are affected. We can benefit greatly by acknowledging and processing our experience. If you've provided behavioral health services to someone who has died by suicide, this infographic is for you.

Shock

It is common to search for reasons why the suicide occurred.

Grief

Grief is a very personal experience with no "right way" to go through it. It may be intense and complex, with many different feelings accompanying it.

Moving Through Grief

Grief and emotions can feel overwhelming, especially in the initial days and months. It can help to take things one day at a time. Try to be kind and gentle with yourself. It helps to establish routines, get extra sleep, exercise, and eat healthy.

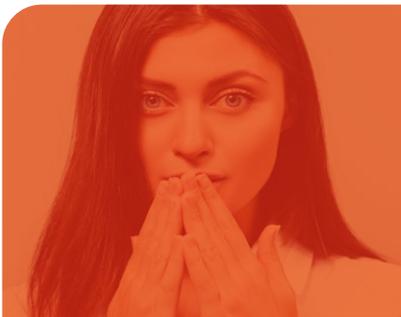
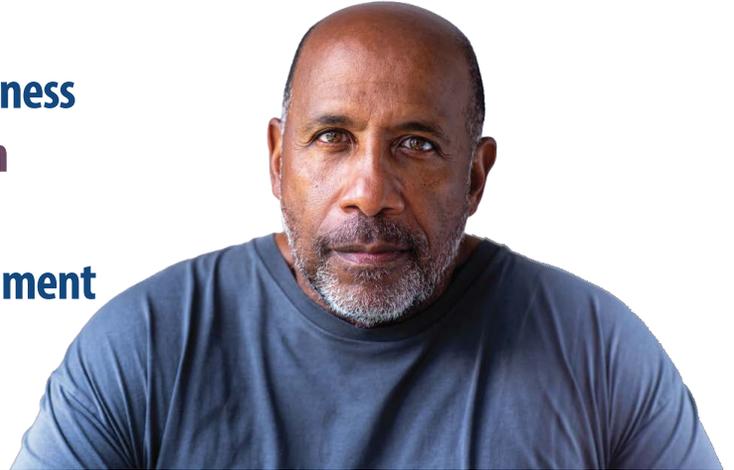
Difficult Emotions

Difficult emotions like uncertainty and guilt are common. It can help to remember that there is no right or wrong way to feel and that it's okay to acknowledge these difficult emotions.



Common emotions experienced during grief include:

- Shock
- Depression
- Shame
- Guilt
- Numbness
- Hopelessness
- Sadness
- Helplessness
- Rejection
- Despair
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Disbelief
- Denial
- Abandonment
- Stress
- Aloneness
- Relief
- Confusion
- Self-blame



Stigma

Stigma, shame, or embarrassment can prevent you from reaching out for help. Sometimes we feel that others might blame us for the suicide, and we might feel like we want to hide our feelings. Additionally, stigma and discomfort can prevent others from being supportive and understanding in the way that is needed. The people around us might feel uncertain about what to do or say to help. They may wait for us to talk about it or ask for help.



Connection and Support

You are not alone. It's common to feel isolated in this grief, even among colleagues, who may not have experienced a death like this. Know that others have endured and you can, too. Many find specialized support groups for behavioral health providers to be helpful. Being with others who have been through something similar and sharing feelings without pressure or fear of judgment and shame can provide relief and comfort. Support groups can be a source of understanding, guidance, and healing.



Crisis

Some people develop persistent despair or emotional distress while grieving. They may even have thoughts of suicide themselves. Help is available. If you are in distress or having thoughts of suicide, talk with a supervisor, therapist, or trusted colleague or contact the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988 or use the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Chat at 988lifeline.org/chat.