

## Support for Survivors of Suicide Loss

Compiled by Bridges of Hope & Partners

*First and foremost: we are so sorry for the loss of your loved one, and while we do not wish to intrude on your grief at this time, we do want to share with you some information that might be useful to you, either now or sometime in the future. The death of a loved one to suicide is a unique experience for each person who is impacted. These materials include tips and information that others have found helpful, and they may or may not work for you. We want you to know that whatever you may be feeling right now, your feelings are a normal response to a very difficult situation. If at any time you feel that you might hurt yourself or someone else, it is important that you talk with a professional who can assist you in getting help. (See below.)*

*In the weeks and months ahead, **do not hesitate to reach out**, including to Bridges of Hope at 218.825.7682, or to any of the others listed here. We all want to help you in any ways we can.*

*Sincerely,  
Kassie Heisserer  
Bridges of Hope Executive Director*



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### **Crisis Line & Referral Service** (serving Crow Wing, Cass, Morrison, Todd, & Wadena Counties)

For support 24/7: call 218.828.4357 or 1.800.462.5525.

The Crisis Line also has access to the **Mobile Crisis Outreach Team**, who can come directly to you.

### **Crisis Text Line**

Text "MN" to 741741

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

1.800.273.8255

### **Survivor of Suicide Loss Support Groups**

- **Nisswa:** Contact Jeri Borgwarth at 763-442-2671
- **Crosby:** Contact the Crisis Line & Referral Service at 218.828.4515

### **Additional Grief Groups (not specific to Suicide Loss)**

- **GriefShare Support Groups:** visit [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org) to find a current or future group start date.
- **Grief Path** meets 10 a.m. second Thursdays at Bethany Good Samaritan. Call Samantha, 828-5886.
- **Grief Support and Education:** specially trained professionals provide information and support to those who have recently lost a loved one. Call 828-7659, St. Joseph's Medical Center.
- **Lakes Area Ecumenical Bereavement** meets 4 p.m. first Thursdays, Immaculate Heart parish hall, Crosslake; contact Donna at 692-3246.
- **Listening Ears Widow and widowers group** for those who have lost a loved one. Call Doris, 829-7565 for information.
- **Staples Grief support** meets 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Faith Lutheran Church in Staples. Call (218) 894-1546.

### **Support for Mental Illness**

- **NAMI-North Central Region** (National Alliance on Mental Illness), 7 p.m. second Thursday, 606 Front St., Brainerd. (888) NAMI-HELPS (press 6#). Support for consumers and family members. Covers Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena counties.
- Call the **Crisis Line & Referral Service** (serving Crow Wing, Cass, Morrison, Todd, & Wadena Counties) at 218.828.4357 or 1.800.462.5525.

**For assistance with other resources in Crow Wing County & surrounding communities: call Bridges of Hope at 218.825.7682 for help navigating & connecting to the various programs in our area; including (but not limited to) help with food, housing, transportation, utilities, childcare, family challenges, employment, and more. There are also many resources (always being updated) listed on Bridges of Hope's website: <http://bridgesofhopemn.org>.**



## **FOR LOSS SURVIVORS: Helpful tips of what might help and what might not help!**

### **WHAT MIGHT HELP**

**People who have been bereaved by suicide say that the following things *can help*:**

- ~**Expressing your feelings and thoughts:** finding ways to let out your feelings and having people around who can listen to you and accept you and what has happened.
- ~**Making opportunities to remember:** this may mean talking about the person, looking at pictures, and videos of them, going to places that remind you of them, creating a box with physical memories (tickets, cards, pictures etc.), writing a journal or blog about them, or continuing to do activities you did together.
- ~**Developing ‘rituals’:** having a way of marking their life, for example by visiting a special place, by creating a lasting memorial or by a simple act such as lighting a candle at the same time each week.
- ~**Participating in activities:** continuing to do things you have previously enjoyed, such as sports, social events, or music.
- ~**Putting your feelings on paper:** you may not feel ready to talk to anyone, but writing down your thoughts and feelings may help you.
- ~**Looking after yourself:** eating well and getting sufficient sleep, see enclosed self-care sheet.
- ~**Spending time outside:** getting out of the house for a change of scene, connecting with nature or doing exercise.
- ~**Meeting, speaking with or reading the words of other people who have been bereaved by suicide:** s  
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- ~**Developing an ‘emotional first aid kit’:** collecting together some things that can help when you are feeling sad or mad or even bad (a music play list, your favorite chocolate, a ball to kick, good reading books, spa candles and some form of cd’s that play relaxing sounds or that have healing music).

### **WHAT MIGHT NOT HELP**

**People who have been bereaved by suicide say that the following things *might not help*:**

- ~**Avoiding talking about what happened:** although it may be really difficult to start with, talking to someone you can trust can make all the difference.
- ~**Drinking more, taking drugs:** it can be tempting to try and blot out the pain of what has happened, but the short term oblivion doesn’t take away the sadness and is likely to make you feel worse.
- ~**Hurrying to make big decisions:** it may be better to let some time pass before making major changes to your life.
- ~**Taking risks:** after someone close has died you may feel ‘what’s the point?’ and take risks with your own health, for example driving too fast. Try and talk to someone you trust if you think you are risking your safety or that of someone else.
- ~**Not seeking help:** you may feel you can’t ask for help as you are worried it will make you seem weak, or that you shouldn’t bother other people when they are grieving (such as members of your family), or when they are busy (such as your doctor). But how you are feeling is very important, and there are people who want to help. Section 6 includes details of support organizations.