

After losing someone to suicide, you may find yourself asking over and over again, "**Why?**" **Why did this happen???**

Suicide is complicated, but from research we know a lot about it.

**More than 90% of people who take their own lives have an underlying mental disorder at the time of their death.** Many times, that disorder was never identified.

The disorders most often associated with suicide are depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Substance abuse, either on its own or in combination with another mental disorder, can also be a factor when someone takes their own life.

These disorders can cause terrible suffering. They can affect a person's ability to think clearly and to make decisions. They can interfere with seeking help, continuing treatment, or taking prescribed medicines.

An underlying mental disorder alone is not usually enough. Most people who kill themselves experienced a combination of deep psychological pain, desperate hopelessness, and challenging life events.

We know that suicide is the tragic outcome of a serious underlying illness combined with a complicated mix of individual circumstances. It is not a sign of moral weakness. It does not reveal a character flaw. It is not a sign of irresponsibility, or a hostile act. It should not be a source of shame. Reading this paragraph over and over again until it sinks in can help you to make sense of the suicide loss and begin your healing journey.

For more information, please visit [Understanding Suicide](#).

Is It Normal to Feel This Way?

If you've lost someone to suicide, you may feel . . .

. . . **alone**, as though no one understands what you're going through.

. . . **shocked**, even if you knew your loved one was at risk. You may find yourself replaying their last days over and over, searching for clues.

. . . **responsible**, wondering whether there was something you missed, or something you could have said or done, or wished you hadn't said or done.

... **angry**, at whoever you believe is to blame: the doctor, therapist, spouse, boss, or principal, for example.

... **abandoned** by the person who died.

... **ashamed** and **worried** about whether to tell people the truth, for fear of being judged.

... **guilty** for laughing, having fun, or beginning to enjoy life again.

... **relieved**.

Don't worry. It is normal to have some, all, or none of these feelings as you cope with suicide loss.

What Should I Do Next?

The first thing to know is that you are not alone. Thousands of others know the pain and tragedy of your heartbreaking loss.

**Here are some ways you can begin to heal:**

- Connect with other survivors of suicide loss through our Support Group Directory or our Survivor Outreach Program.
- Search our bibliography to learn more about suicide and the mental illnesses that can cause it, to see how other people have coped, or for poetry and other inspiration.
- You may need to take the initiative to talk openly and honestly about the suicide, share your feelings, and ask for their help. When people offer to help but are not sure what to say or do, offer them our list: For Others Who Want to Help.
- For more guidance about coping with suicide, download *Surviving a Suicide Loss: A Resource and Healing Guide*.

There is no set rhythm or timeline for healing. Each person grieves at his or her own pace and in his or her own way. Some people want to talk about it all the time; others don't want to talk much at all. Be patient with yourself and those around you. It takes time to heal.