

Looking after yourself –those bereaved and impacted by suicide

1. Understand - The death of someone close to you may come as an immense shock and bring a range of intense emotions that could include anger, sadness, fear, and guilt. Be prepared for any or all reactions. Grief is not linear.
2. Just be - Sometimes giving yourself permission to “just be” with your emotions and mind, without putting any pressure on yourself to achieve something or feel a certain way on that day. It is okay if you do not feel the same emotions as others or express emotions in different ways. Don’t let anyone tell you how to feel, and don’t tell yourself how to feel.
3. Look after yourself - Take care of your physical health. Grieving can be exhausting, so it’s important to eat healthy food, exercise and try to get enough sleep but understand this may be difficult. Rest when you can.
4. Share memories – When you are ready, don’t be afraid to share stories about the person who died, the life they lived and what they meant to you, and invite others to do so.
5. Why? - For many people bereaved by suicide there may be a strong desire to know why the death happened. Searching for answers can be endless and exhausting. It is important to understand that the reason behind a person’s suicide can be complex and may never be completely understood.
6. Accept support – accept offers of support, and don’t be afraid to reach out to others. What helps each individual is unique to them. Often people want to help but don’t know how, so tell them what you need. Think about your own needs and find ways to help you meet these - through seeking professional support, or it could be private reflections, practical tasks, creative outlets – there is no rulebook to follow.
7. Stay connected – Those around you may not know how to support you best, and you may want to be alone. It is important not to feel isolated and stay connected to others, but people may need help to do this, reach out.
8. Set Boundaries - It is okay to put personal boundaries in place to communicate what you need from those around you. Do what works for you, and what you are comfortable with.