

## Children affected by suicide

It is often best simply to be truthful about what happened and how it is affecting you, without going into too much detail.

Children should be encouraged to talk about their feelings and not to bottle things up. Reading stories and drawing can help children express emotions.

Children are likely to need reassurance that they are not to blame in any way for the death and that people still love and care for them.

## Accessing helpful services

- **Console**  
Phone 1 800 201 890  
[www.console.ie](http://www.console.ie)
- **Bethany Bereavement Support Groups**  
Phone (01) 494 3142  
<http://homepage.eircom.net/~bethanysupport/>
- **Teenline**  
Phone: 1 800 833 643  
[www.teenline.ie](http://www.teenline.ie)

- **Barnardo's**  
Phone: (01) 473 2110  
[www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)
  - **Citizen's Information Centre**  
Phone: 076 107 4000  
[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)
  - **Living Links**  
Phone: 087 412 2052  
[www.livinglinks.ie](http://www.livinglinks.ie)
  - **Contact a psychologist**  
Phone: (01) 472 0105  
[www.psihq.ie](http://www.psihq.ie)
  - **Contact a psychotherapist/  
counsellor**  
Phone: (01) 902 3819  
or (01) 272 3427  
Web: [www.psychotherapy-ireland.com](http://www.psychotherapy-ireland.com) or  
[www.irish-counselling.ie](http://www.irish-counselling.ie)
  - **Contact your G.P.**  
[www.icgp.ie](http://www.icgp.ie)
- Further resources and electronic versions of this and other leaflets are available at [www.svhf.ie/clinical-psychology-service.html](http://www.svhf.ie/clinical-psychology-service.html) and [www.nosp.ie/not\\_alone-directory.pdf](http://www.nosp.ie/not_alone-directory.pdf)



# After Suicide

## Losing a Loved One To Suicide

*Support to those who are bereaved or have suffered the loss by suicide*

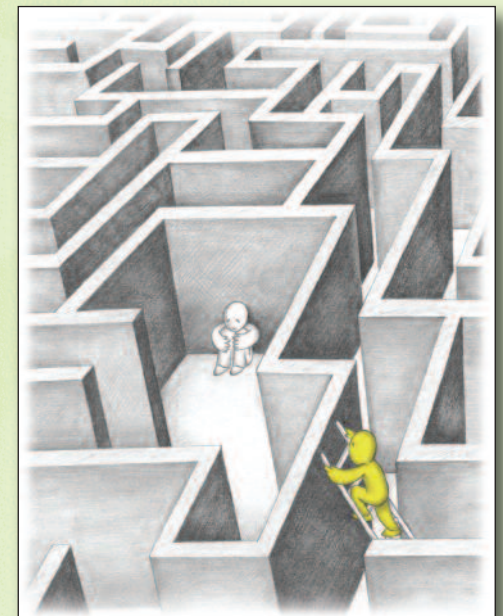


Illustration by Alan O'Reagan

## Your Experience

Although the effects of suicide on family and friends can be similar to other bereavements, they can also differ in a number of ways. Struggling to make sense of a death by suicide is very common. Some typical experiences:

### *Emotions:*

- Sadness, loss, relief.
- Guilt, shame.
- Anger, rage.
- Disappointment, let down, hurt.

### *Thoughts:*

- Why has this happened?
- I can't believe it.
- I should have known.
- Responsibility - I could have stopped it.
- Blame - It's my fault.
- I'm glad they are out of their misery.

### *Behaviours:*

- Difficulty sleeping.
- Isolating yourself.
- Avoiding talking about the deceased.
- Drinking or using drugs more.
- Comfort eating or loss of appetite.
- Giving up hobbies or interests.

## Useful things to Know

These are common responses. You are not going crazy. You are grieving the loss of someone close.

It is important to know that it is not your fault. You need to be kind and gentle with yourself. You need to take care of yourself and allow yourself time to grieve.

Suicide is often the result of a complex combination of several factors. Answers to questions about what really happened and why may never be known. Often dealing with this uncertainty is part of the grieving process, especially when the death is unexpected. There may be no way to fully understand the deceased's frame of mind at the time of death.

Below is a quote by Caroline from "After a Suicide" published by the Scottish Association for Mental Health ([www.samhs.org.uk](http://www.samhs.org.uk)) that describes her painful experiences and loneliness after her son died by suicide.

*"Before Darren died, the phone never stopped ringing, but afterwards it was the opposite. People who I thought were friends cut contact and said things that made me*

*feel judged as a parent. They didn't realise that their comments were really, really hurtful. I felt rejected and isolated which made me retreat for a period of time. But support groups and organisations made me realise that I wasn't alone and that the feelings I was having were normal."*

## What to do?

You might want to talk to someone about the emotions you are experiencing. Talk to a trusted friend or if you think you need more help contact a psychologist or psychotherapist. There is list of helpful organisations on the back of this leaflet.

You might need help with practical issues that need to be faced after a suicide of someone close. Your local Citizen's Information Centre can help ([www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) or phone 076 107 4000).