



## Support for Survivors of Suicide Loss



**Georgia Department of  
Behavioral Health &  
D-B-H-D-D Developmental Disabilities**

Office of Behavioral Health Prevention &  
Federal Grants | Suicide Prevention Program

When someone dies by suicide, the effects of their loss ripple through the lives of those around them. One study suggests that 115 people are directly affected by the loss of one person to suicide.<sup>1</sup>



**115**

Lives are directly affected

**53**

Lives are disrupted

**25**

Lives are disrupted significantly

**11**

Lives are devastated

The term, "Survivor of Suicide Loss," refers to anyone whose life has been affected by a suicide loss. Some survivors may have experienced the loss of a spouse, child, parent, or other close relative. Others may have lost a friend, coworker, or acquaintance.

Regardless of your relationship to the person, if the loss of someone you love or care about impacts your life in a profound way, this booklet is designed for you.


Dear Friend,

We want to express our sincere condolences on the loss of your loved one. Survivors of suicide, such as yourself, often feel grief, among other complex feelings, and they may find it difficult to navigate the grieving process due to the unique circumstances of their loss.

We want you to know you are not alone. While this experience of losing your loved one cannot be compared, there are many survivors across Georgia who share in the understanding of how suicide deeply affects and changes our lives.

Right now, you may be unsure how you will cope. Everyone grieves differently, and it is ok to not have all the answers. Please know these resources are here when you're ready. Take care of yourself, and do not be afraid to ask for help.

Warmly,

  
Jill Mays   Donna Dent   Rachael Holloman   Erin Conaway   Shevon Jones   Justin Powlison

*The Georgia DBHDD Office of Behavioral Health Prevention  
and Federal Grants*

dbhdd.ga.gov

*"Someone you love has ended their own life -  
and yours is forever changed."*

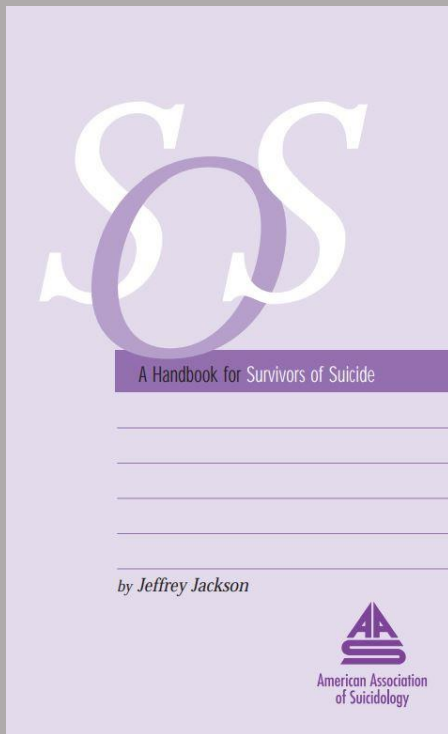
*~ Jeffery Jackson, A Handbook for Survivors of Suicide*

Written by Jeffery Jackson, a survivor of suicide, the SOS Handbook walks survivors through the healing process after a loss. The guide explores tough topics that come with suicide and offers tips to support survivors in their recovery. Topics covered in the guide include:

- Stages of Grief
- Common emotions and experiences
- The question, "Why?"
- Talking to children about suicide
- Suicide myths and facts
- Tips for coping with suicide loss
- Support
- The Suicide Survivor's Bill of Rights

Download your copy of the guide from the link below:

<http://bit.ly/sos-aas>



# Children, Teens and Suicide Loss Handbook

## American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

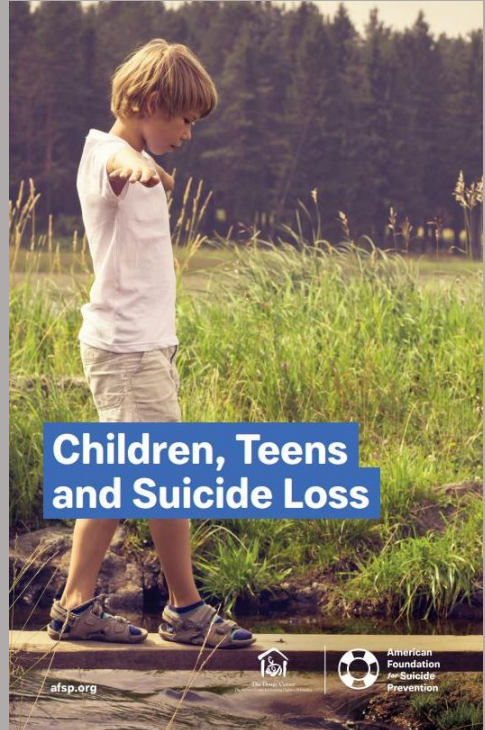
Helping a child or teen talk about suicide loss in a healthy manner can set the stage for their healing process.

**Children, Teens and Suicide Loss** provides practical information you can use to help you navigate the conversation, including:

- Taking care of yourself
- Understanding suicide
- Navigating the immediate aftermath
- Helping young people cope and heal
- Understanding suicide grief in children and teens
- Deciding if your child needs additional support
- Helping teens cope and heal
- Understanding suicide grief in teens

Download your copy of the guide from the link below:


<http://bit.ly/ctsl-afsp>



## Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Support Groups

You may find that talking to others who understand what it is like to lose someone to suicide can decrease feelings of loneliness and isolation and support you as you grieve.

In Georgia, there are support groups designed specifically for survivors. These groups are called Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Support Groups. SOS Groups provide opportunities for survivors to offer mutual support to each other as they navigate the experience of grief after the loss of someone to suicide together.



*Talking with  
other survivors  
can be helpful  
and healing.*



A full list of Survivors of Suicide groups can be found at the link below. Currently, support groups are located in the following cities:\*

- Albany
- Athens
- Augusta
- Cleveland
- Columbus
- Cumming
- Decatur
- Newnan
- Roswell
- Savannah

<http://bit.ly/sos-groups>

*\*Cities with newer groups may not be included here but will be added to the full list as they are established.*

# National Organizations

## American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

AFSP offers a variety of resources to support survivors, from information about suicide loss and opportunities to connect with other survivors, to ways survivors can honor the ones they love.

<http://afsp.org/live-lost-someone>

## American Association of Suicidology

Resources to help survivors as they travel through the grief of a loved one and tips and resources for support during this painful time.

<https://suicidology.org/suicide-loss-survivors>

## Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)

SPRC maintains a resource list of organizations, websites, and materials that can help people who have lost someone to suicide.

<http://bit.ly/sos-sprc>

## Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE)

SAVE provides tools that can help survivors cope with grief.

<https://save.org/find-help/coping-with-loss/>



## Clinicians as Survivors

Resources for clinical and other mental health professionals to assist in understanding and responding to personal/professional loss.

<http://cliniciansurvivor.org>

## Alliance of Hope

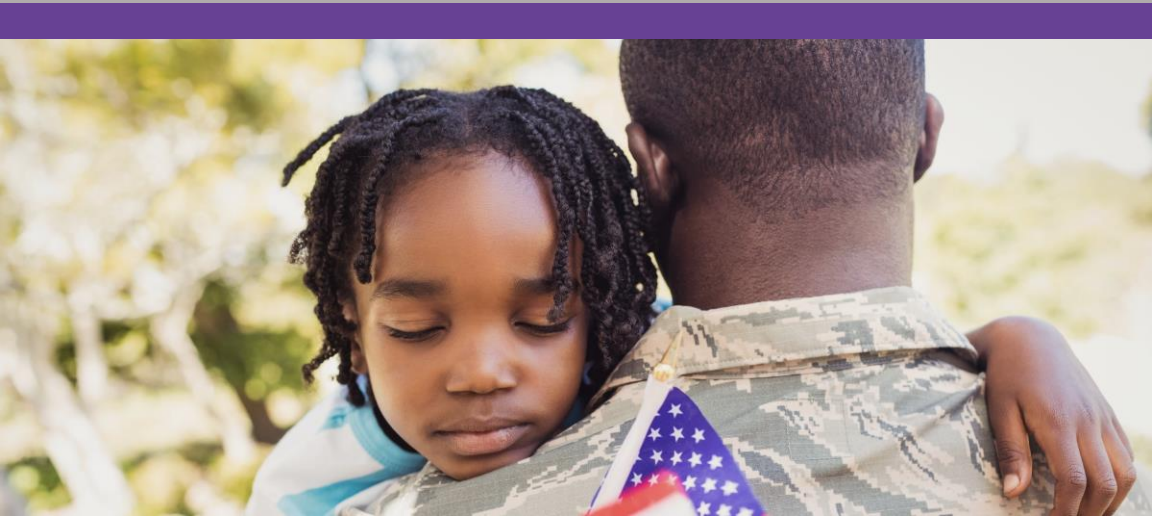
Alliance of Hope provides a place of healing & remembrance for survivors.

<https://allianceofhope.org/>

## TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors)

Special programs and resources for those who have lost a loved one in the military. TAPS provides gentle, understanding support to help survivors work through the complicated emotions associated with this type of loss.

<https://www.taps.org/suicideloss>



# Local Organizations

## AFSP Georgia, Healing Conversations

Healing Conversations matches survivors with peers who understand the experience of suicide loss. Volunteers from AFSP-Georgia, who are themselves survivors of suicide loss, offer understanding and guidance in the weeks and months following a suicide death.

<http://afsp.org/healing-conversations>

## The Link Counseling Center

The Link provides counseling, psychotherapy and support groups to people of all ages, helping them to heal and rebuild their lives.

<https://www.thelink.org/>

## Suicide Prevention Action Network – Georgia (SPAN-GA)

SPAN-GA provides services which support healing and promote connection for survivors. Their work with survivors ranges from outreach and ongoing support for new survivors to training and advocacy to assist survivors on the healing path.

<https://www.span-ga.org/>

## Georgia Crisis & Access Line (GCAL)

GCAL provides support in accessing services, referrals to therapeutic and specialty programs, and crisis services. If you need help finding support or during a crisis, call the number any time.

[1.800.715.4225](tel:1.800.715.4225) (GCAL)

# Therapeutic Support

Survivors often share that a combination of supports, including therapy or counseling, helps them to better process these unique feelings and experiences that come with loss to suicide.

It can be beneficial to seek a counselor who has experience working with survivors of suicide loss, and who have training in treating traumatic or complicated grief. A few resources that can help find treatment services are listed below:

## Community Service Board (CSB)

CSBs offer behavioral health, developmental disability, and specialty services. <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/locations/community-service-board>

## Georgia Crisis & Access Line (GCAL)

GCAL can help you locate and access treatment and support services. You can reach them at **1.800.715.4225 (GCAL)** any time.

## SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) National Helpline:

This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. Call **1.800.662.HELP (4357)** any time.

# Healing Therapies & Supports

## Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

For survivors who are exposed directly to the death of a loved one, especially if they witnessed the death or found their loved one after, trauma symptoms can often develop in the following days, weeks, and months.

EMDR therapy has been found to reduce intrusive thoughts and help lessen the effects of such trauma. The therapy uses brief recall of the memory and sensory stimulation (usually eye movement) to help survivors safely process emotions and traumatic images related to the event.

<https://www.emdr.com/>

## Suicide Bereavement Trained Clinician

These therapists, counselors, and other clinical professionals have participated in AFSP's Suicide Bereavement Clinician Training Program.

Through this program, clinicians learn skills to enhance their ability to understand and empathetically support survivors. They also learn principles for long-term work with survivors and specific techniques for use in grief therapy with survivors.

To find a Suicide Bereavement Trained Clinician in your area, visit the link below:

<https://afsp.org/suicide-bereavement-trained-clinicians>

## Complicated Grief Therapy

Suicide grief is complex, and it is common for survivors to experience prolonged grief. The intensity of this grief can sometimes interfere with other parts of life, making it feel difficult to move forward.

Complicated Grief Treatment (CGT) is a short-term therapy that strengthens a bereaved person's natural ability to adapt and deal with issues that complicate grief after suicide loss. Through this therapy, survivors learn how to understand grief, manage strong emotions, think about the future, rebuild strong relationships, think about the death, revisit reminders of the loss, and access living memories.


<https://complicatedgrief.columbia.edu/>



## My Self-Care Plan

Sometimes, when we are experiencing overwhelming emotions, we can forget to take care of our basic needs. During this time, creating a plan to take care of you can not only help you get through the difficult moments but can also help you find new ways to channel your feelings and manage your grief.

AFSP's Self-Care Strategies for Resilience is an easy way to create a simple plan for taking care of you. Take a few moments to look over the tip sheet at <http://bit.ly/selfcare-afsp>. On the next page, write down some things you can commit to doing in the coming days and weeks.



*“If you have  
lost a loved one  
to suicide, you  
are not alone.”  
~ Alliance of Hope*



Mind

Body

Soul

Scenery



Georgia Crisis  
& Access Line

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1-800-715-4225  
mygal.com



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<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/sos-resources>