

Suicide&co



GRIEF WORKBOOK



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Registered charity number 1187985 ©

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ABOUT US

Suicide&Co is a national charity supporting those bereaved by suicide. Our mission is to provide tailored emotional support, as well as open up the conversation around suicide-related grief, while reminding everyone that they always have company and permission to grieve.

Since 2020 we have been supporting people bereaved by suicide through our Early Bereavement Support service, our Counselling Service, and through our on-demand digital resources like our App and our Help Hub.



Suicide&co

OUR BELIEF

Our mission is to prevent mental health deterioration after the trauma of losing a loved one to suicide, providing adults bereaved by suicide with timely and effective support, because everyone deserves to feel like they have permission to grieve.



We know that your grief never leaves you, although it is our belief that over time and with the right support, you can heal and build your life back up around your grief.

Grief is not linear and everyone's journey is unique and therefore will not necessarily follow the same stages or time scale - this is okay, there is no right or wrong way to work through your grief.

OUR GRIEF PRINCIPLES

All grief is unique

- Everyone in our community is united by suicide loss, but it's important to remember that everyone's journey is unique - no two experiences of a bereavement will ever be the same, and we respect that everyone responds to grief differently.

There is no linear timeline

- Sometimes we might feel like we "should" have processed parts of our loss at certain milestones, but it's important to remember that grief has no linear timeline. Grief comes in waves, and some days might feel easier than others.

Grief can cause physical symptoms

- Most people tend to focus on the emotional impact of suicide loss, but it's important to remember that grief can often cause physical symptoms, too. Fatigue, aches, changes in appetite and sleep difficulties are all common side effects of grief.

We must support ourselves before we support others

- Putting your own oxygen mask on before helping others is important to remember when navigating suicide loss. If you don't support yourself first, you will have less resources, energy and compassion to offer others.

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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Suicide&Co's Grief Workbook is based on the 'Wellness Recovery Action Plan' developed by Mary Ellen Copeland, an American author and mental health advocate. This workbook provides a framework to help you recognise and overcome stress and stressors, and to manage unhelpful behaviour patterns.

It is completely up to you to decide how you use it - what works for you, who to share it with, and how much time to dedicate towards it. This is a guide to support you as you move through your grief, and it's important to remember that everyone's journey is unique.

Losing someone to suicide is incredibly difficult, and you don't have to be directly connected to the person who died to be affected by the loss - in fact, research has shown that up to 135 people can be affected by every suicide. It is also important to remember that grief looks different for everyone; you may find yourself reacting in ways you never expected, and these behaviours and feelings can manifest very differently from one person to the next.

The aim of this workbook is to provide you with a practical guide for daily wellbeing and maintenance, as well as a place to turn to in times of difficulty. We want you to be able to recognise signs of grief in yourself, and to feel confident that you know when to manage these symptoms on your own, and when to turn to others for help.

DAILY MAINTENANCE PLAN

This is your baseline. A description of how you feel and act when everything feels on track and okay. This can be a description of internal feelings, as well as how you may act or appear to others.

This also includes examples of things you already do, used to do, or try to do, to maintain this baseline of wellbeing.

What I am like when I am at my baseline...

Things I need to do every day to keep myself at my baseline...

Things I need to do occasionally to maintain my wellbeing...

IDENTIFYING STRESSORS

Stressors are things that, if they happen, are likely to cause a chain reaction of uncomfortable or unhelpful behaviours, thoughts or feelings. Losing someone to suicide is a stressor and it is the focus of this workbook, however, take this time to also think about other (possibly less obvious) things that could be acting as stressors in your life.

Have a think about things that cause additional stress or unhelpful thought patterns in your life, and what a response might be to help yourself.

Examples might include the anniversary of a bereavement, other key dates or times and possible stressor points. The actionable response could be to schedule time off for the anniversary of a loved one or spend some time journaling to keep a log of positive memories.

STRESSORS	POSSIBLE RESPONSES

WARNING SIGNS

These are subtle changes in thoughts and feelings. You may notice these within yourself and your thought processes. They may or may not manifest in behaviours that others could notice or look out for, so it is important to pay attention to what these changes feel like internally, as well as how they can change your behaviour and actions.

Noticing these signs means that you have the opportunity to take actions to avoid the symptoms or situation getting worse.

Examples might include feeling nervous, changes in appetite, or disrupted sleep.

Some early warning signs that I or others have observed:

Things I should do if I experience these warning signs:

WHEN THINGS ARE BREAKING DOWN

It is important to note that many symptoms, such as changes in sleep pattern, changes to your appetite, or other physical or emotional symptoms such as anxiety or anger, are common responses to a loss. These symptoms can be particularly strong in the time immediately following a bereavement.

Always reach out if you are experiencing any symptoms which feel concerning or out of the ordinary for you. They could be natural trauma responses that will settle, or they may represent a sign that things are breaking down.

Things may be 'breaking down' when your changes in behaviour become more frequent, part of an unwanted routine, or inescapable. It is always best to speak to someone if you are concerned in any way about your mental or physical health.

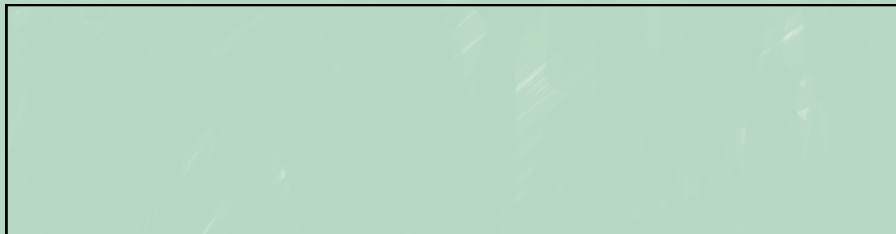
If you are unsure about how you are feeling, you can always explore options for support. Our Early Bereavement Service is available for the first 6 months following a loss, and our Counselling Service is available after this 6 month mark. Our on-demand digital resources like our App and our Help Hub would be available at any stage of your grief journey and in your own time. You can also visit our [immediate support](https://suicideandco.org/immediate-support) page over at suicideandco.org/immediate-support where we share more information about other services and support.

These are signs and symptoms that indicate that I might be getting worse...

e.g. not sleeping or sleeping too much/ withdrawing from social activities or spending very little time alone/ intrusive thoughts/ dissociation or poor memory

ACTION PLAN

Things that can reduce symptoms when they have progressed to this point...



WELLNESS TOOLKIT

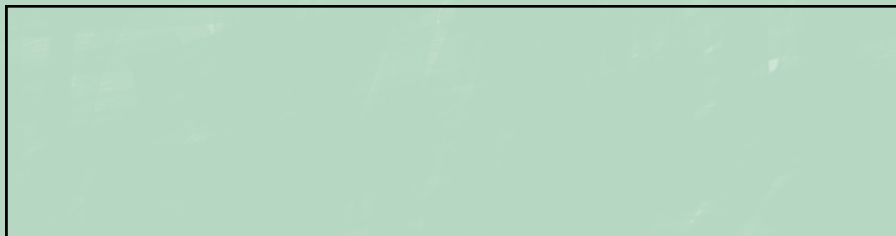
This wellness toolkit includes things that you know work for you to help relieve symptoms or uplift your mood. This can also include things that you haven't tried before that you'd like to.

Your toolkit should include things that would be beneficial for you to do daily, as well as more occasional activities.

Examples could include:

- Journaling
- Speaking with a friend, loved one or mental health professional
- Cooking or eating your favourite meal
- Meditating
- Listening to music
- Going on holiday or getting away for a weekend

My wellness toolkit



PRACTICAL SHARING PLAN

This sharing plan is a space for you to share some of the information from this workbook with others. To let them know how you're feeling, what stressors they can look out for, and how you would like them to support you with your mental health in your grief journey.

The plan references segments of exercises completed earlier, so it might be helpful to refer back to these and choose the answers that resonate the most with you. The following page also contains a space for you to share key dates, anniversaries, and appointments which could be a stressor for you, and may therefore be helpful for others to know about.

Please feel free to share and answer as many or as few questions as you feel comfortable with.

This is what I am like when I am feeling at my baseline (reference daily maintenance plan)



These are signs that indicate that things are breaking down, and that I may need some additional support



If things are breaking down, these are the people that I would like to be contacted.

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Use this space to highlight any key dates or stressors that you would like others to be aware of, and how you would like them to support you if/when these occur

STRESSORS	POSSIBLE RESPONSES

NEXT STEPS

Now that you've completed your grief workbook, remember to keep it in a safe place and pass on your sharing plan to those you trust. We have a number of other resources detailed below which you might find helpful for supporting yourself on your grief journey.

OUR SERVICES

Early Bereavement Support Service

Staffed by our trained Suicide Bereavement Advisor team, we offer emotional and practical support delivered via telephone or video call for the first 6 months following a loss to suicide. To access this service, you must be over the age of 18, live in the UK, and have been bereaved for less than 6 months. Applications can be made through our website or by calling our Client Care Team on 0800 054 8400.

Counselling Service

We offer 12 free-to-access counselling sessions to anyone bereaved by suicide, delivered via telephone or video call. To access this service, you must be over the age of 18, live in the UK and have been bereaved for 6 months or longer.

Applications can be made through our website or by calling our Client Care Team on 0800 054 8400.

sidekick by Suicide&Co App

Designed to support people bereaved by suicide at any stage of their grief journey, our iPhone app includes a sleep guide, daily mood tracker and a personalised toolkit including journalling prompts, articles and meditation exercises all specific to suicide bereavement.

Help Hub

You'll find a wealth of digital resources on the Help Hub on our website, featuring reviews of books and podcast on suicide-related grief, signposting to other specialised services, and providing practical guidance around navigating suicide loss.

IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

If you feel like you need to talk to someone immediately, you'll find links to helplines and text services that you can contact if you are in crisis on our website at www.suicideandco.org/immediate-support

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