

# Bereavement by Suicide

Because suicide is considered a taboo subject, those bereaved in this way can feel very isolated.

The silence of others reinforces this isolation and any feelings of rejection and abandonment that the family is experiencing. The opportunity to talk about what has happened is often denied, so support is limited.

Where a person has witnessed or discovered a suicide, traumatic flashbacks are likely to occur.

It is hard to accept that someone chose to take their own life, and guilt at not having prevented the death is often a feature of bereavement by suicide. Often the situation before the death looks more obvious in retrospect.

Anger at the deceased for having left their loved ones behind in this way is very likely to occur. 'How could you do this to us?'

There may be some relief at no longer having to live with a suicidal person, but that feeling will bring its own guilt.

Grief is often prolonged as those left behind search for an explanation as to why their loved one died. They may feel unloved by someone who has chosen to leave them. Sometimes family members will blame each other for the tragedy.

Shock and disbelief will be very intense.

Despair is a natural part of the grieving process, but after a suicide a person can fear for their own safety, as if suicide is somehow 'catching'. Those bereaved in this way can experience great anxiety and are vulnerable to suicidal feelings.

The media coverage that sometimes follows such a death is an added burden.

The judgement of others can be hard to cope with. They may be critical of the deceased, or imply that the survivors are somehow to blame.