

## **WHAT DO I SAY...to my friends after a suicide death:**

Suicide grief is unlike any other grief. In addition to all the emotions one experiences after a loss, suicide brings with it unanswered questions...many of which will never be answered. Supporting survivors during the grief process is challenging due to the stigma surrounding suicide. Reach out!

### **WHAT TO DO:**

- Allow the grieving person to express his/her emotions – tears, anger, devastation, confusion, guilt etc. – **without judgment**
- **Provide whatever help you can** – running errands, mowing the lawn, shoveling the sidewalk, making a meal – rather than offer and wait for them to take you up on it
- **Reassure** them that what they are experiencing/ feeling is okay (provided they are not hurting themselves or others)
- **Recognize** that there is no timeline for grief. While it is often said the first year is the most difficult the second year can be more so for some people
- **Encourage communication** among family members who are experiencing the loss – often we keep our emotions hidden for fear of upsetting others however it's important to acknowledge that everyone has their own grief journey

### **WHAT NOT TO DO:**

- **DON'T** try to move them through their grief – there is no timeline for the grief process
- **DON'T** blame someone/something else for the death in an effort to make them feel better
- **DON'T** assume that a good day means they are “over it”. The goal is not to get over the loss but rather to incorporate it into their new normal – this takes time including some good days and some bad ones
- **DON'T** rush survivors to go through their loved ones' belongs – some choose to do so immediately and others take years – there is no right or wrong time – be there to help if asked
- **DON'T** try to answer the question WHY? – no one knows for sure why someone ends their life and the question of “why?” may never be satisfactorily answered

4101 – 54 Avenue Red Deer, AB T4N 1G8

Phone: 403 – 342 – 4966 Fax: 403 – 342 -4154

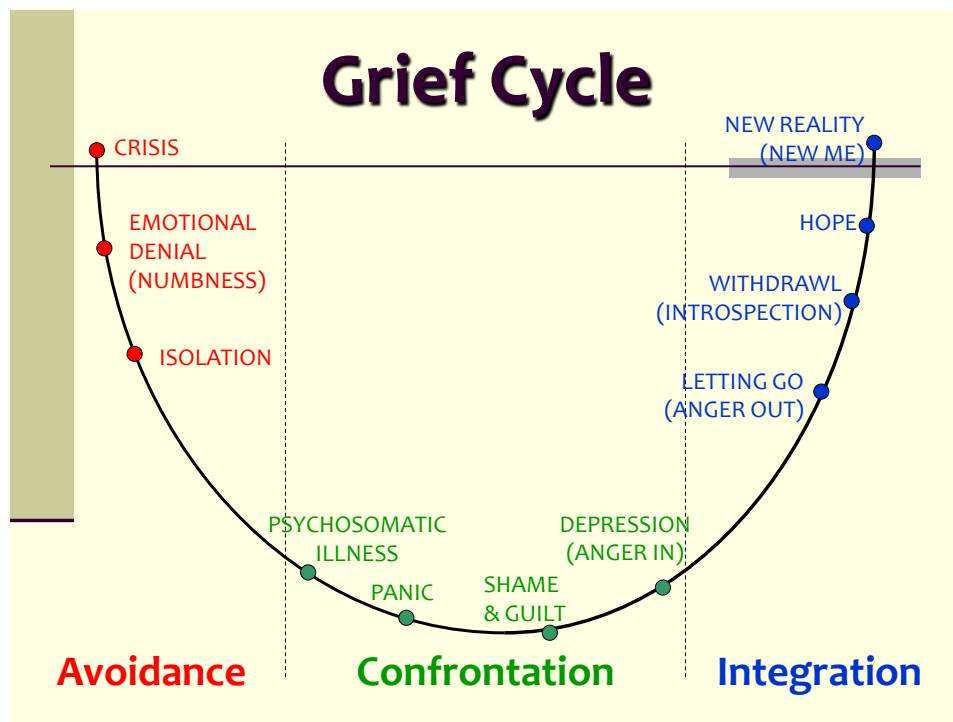
Email: [support@suicidehelp.ca](mailto:support@suicidehelp.ca) Website: [www.suicidehelp.ca](http://www.suicidehelp.ca)

Follow us on twitter @ suicidehelpca

Find us on Facebook – Suicide Information & Education Services

## LANGUAGE

- When speaking about suicide, avoid using the terms “committed” or “completed” suicide as these have negative and positive connotations
- The preferred language is “died by suicide” as there is no judgement in this phrase



Although seemingly an orderly process, the grief cycle is anything but! Survivors may find themselves in one place one day, hour or minute and in a completely different place the next. This is normal! Recognize that others in their lives who are also grieving are going through the same process and will not be in the same place as one another at any given time. Communicate with loved ones so there's no confusion about where everyone is at – this will help a lot with assumptions and misinterpretations.

## RESOURCES:

**SUICIDE INFORMATION & EDUCATION SERVICES**  
offers a support group for survivors; please call for more info

**IN A CRISIS PLEASE CALL**  
**1-877-303-2642**  
**1-800-784-2433 (403 calling area)**  
**1-800-232-7288 (780 calling area)**

4101 – 54 Avenue Red Deer, AB T4N 1G8  
Phone: 403 – 342 – 4966 Fax: 403 – 342 -4154  
Email: [support@suicidehelp.ca](mailto:support@suicidehelp.ca) Website: [www.suicidehelp.ca](http://www.suicidehelp.ca)  
Follow us on twitter @ suicidehelpca  
Find us on Facebook – Suicide Information & Education Services