



Supporting Survivors of Suicide Loss: A Guide for Funeral Directors

Setting
Funeral Homes

Type of Program
Awareness

NSSP Goals Addressed
2.3, 7.5

Program Description

Supporting Survivors of Suicide Loss: A Guide for Funeral Directors was developed through a collaboration of the Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The *Guide's* purpose is to provide funeral directors with a greater understanding of the issue of suicide as it relates to their profession. Topics covered in the *Guide* include:

- Why suicide is different than other types of deaths.
- How to avoid stigmatizing those who've died by suicide.
- How to be sensitive to the needs of survivors of suicide loss.
- How to deal with compassion fatigue.
- Frequently asked questions about suicide loss.
- Resources for funeral directors and their clients.
- Recommended readings.

The *Guide* was developed by SPAN USA and SPRC staff and reviewed by the National Funeral Directors Association.

Program Objectives

After reading the *Guide*, funeral directors should have:

1. Increased knowledge about suicide and ways to support those bereaved by a suicide loss.
2. Increased knowledge of available resources for funeral directors and survivors of suicide loss.
3. Increased skill in choosing words that are helpful to survivors and do not reinforce stigma associated with suicide.
4. Increased capacity to identify suicide risk factors and warning signs and refer survivors to mental health providers as appropriate.

Implementation Essentials

- Funeral directors should be aware of local and national support services for survivors of suicide loss and others who may be at risk for suicide.

Contact Information

Supporting Survivors of Suicide Loss: A Guide for Funeral Directors was developed by the Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (www.spanusa.org) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (www.sprc.org).

Costs

Supporting Survivors of Suicide Loss: A Guide for Funeral Directors is available for free. It can be downloaded from SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center at <http://nmhicstore.samhsa.gov/>.

*The content of practices listed in Section III (Adherence to Standards) of the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry address specific goals of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* and have been reviewed by a panel of three suicide prevention experts and found to meet standards of accuracy, safety, and programmatic guidelines. Practices were not reviewed for evidence of effectiveness. Additional information about the Best Practices Registry can be found at www.sprc.org.

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