Six Ways to Help Someone Who Lost a Loved One to Suicide

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People who have lost a loved one to suicide can experience an intense form of grief. Experts recommend the following strategies for supporting them. To help a suicide loss survivor feel less alone, be physically and emotionally present for them. To help reduce feelings of guilt, remind them that suicide is complex and they are not to blame for the death of their loved one. Reassure them that feelings such as anger, sadness, and self-doubt are normal. Follow the loss survivor’s lead in the conversation—let them decide how much they want to share. Celebrate the life of the person who died instead of focusing on the details of their death. “Use their loved one’s name, remember who they were before they struggled with whatever their issues were, acknowledge that the death doesn’t define them,” said Kim Ruocco, vice president of suicide postvention and prevention at the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. “Talking about the life they lived is incredibly helpful.”

Spark Extra! Find resources for suicide loss survivors.

Links within this resource