



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

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Director's Corner

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Saturday, November 21, 2015 is this year's [International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day](#) [1].

This observance began in 1999 when Senator Harry Reid, himself a loss survivor, introduced a resolution to designate the Saturday before Thanksgiving National Survivors of Suicide Day—an occasion for families and friends of people who died by suicide to join together for healing and support. That day was chosen because the holidays are often a difficult time for loss survivors. With the World Health Organization reporting approximately 800,000 people dying by suicide each year, it soon became clear there was a global need for this observance, which is now officially called [International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day](#) [1].

The [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) [2] (AFSP) organizes and supports Survivor Day events in more than 300 locations in the United States and 18 other countries. For many suicide loss survivors, attending these healing conferences is the first time they realize they are not alone. The events provide loss survivors with tools, resources, and a support network to help manage their grief and healing journeys. While the programming differs across events—there may be panel discussions, keynote speakers, educational sessions, and so forth—each event includes a screening of an AFSP-produced documentary about the suicide loss experience.

AFSP launched its [documentary series](#) [3] on last year's Survivor Day. The series shares personal stories of hope and healing after a suicide loss and explores the range of experiences and emotions people face as they heal. The



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first film in the series, *The Journey*, features a range of loss survivors including parents who lost a child, children who lost a parent, a husband who lost his wife, and one loss survivor who had not spoken about losing a loved one for more than a decade. The film also features expert commentary by AFSP Chief Medical Officer Christine Moutier, who provides guidance on hope and healing throughout the stories.

This year's film, *Family Journeys*, traces the ripple effects of a suicide through the experiences of three families. It shows how the members of each family—together and as individuals—are weathering the loss of their loved ones and how they are healing and finding new meaning.

For those who do not live near an event location or who may not be ready to attend an in-person event, AFSP provides the option to participate in Survivor Day through a [simultaneous online event](#) [4] during which they can watch the new documentary and join a live discussion with experts and fellow loss survivors.

These important events would not happen without the participation of the many loss survivors who are speaking up about suicide and reaching out to the newly bereaved. It's inspiring to see their passion for helping others. We're glad to be a part of this life-saving work. Thanks to their efforts, the way our society treats families who have lost loved ones to suicide is changing for the better. More loss survivors are able to open up about their experiences, which is critical to the healing process. We hope you will join them—and AFSP—in their efforts to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide. Visit [SurvivorDay.org](#) [1] to learn more and to get involved.

Populations: Survivors of Suicide Loss

Links within this resource

- [1] <http://www.survivorday.org/>
- [2] <http://www.afsp.org/>
- [3] <http://www.survivorday.org/survivor-day-documentaries/>
- [4] <http://www.survivorday.org/survivor-day-live/>

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