

## *You are not alone*

Every year, more than 100 Alaskans die by suicide. Like you, their family and friends are survivors of suicide loss.

Together, we learn to cope and to heal.

Survivors often feel:

### **Shock**

Feeling numb and having trouble concentrating.

### **Depression**

Feeling intensely sad, not wanting to eat, having trouble sleeping or sleeping more than usual.

### **Anger**

Feeling angry towards the person you've lost, someone else or yourself is common.

### **Relief**

If the death was the end of a rocky life, maybe including mental illness, relief is a normal feeling.

### **Guilt**

Many people ask themselves if they missed a sign or wonder if they could have done something to help. Survivors may feel guilty about feelings of relief or anger.

Depression and thoughts of suicide are also common among people who have experienced a loss to suicide. Survivors of a loss to suicide do not have to struggle with these feelings alone.

There are people and agencies throughout the state that are ready to provide help and reassurance after a suicide.

Please remember suicide is not a solution to pain and distress. These feelings usually fade with time as we process our thoughts and emotions, and take steps to heal.

For more on suicide prevention and survivor support in Alaska:

**Alaska Division of Behavioral Health**  
dhss.alaska.gov/dbh  
907-465-3370



**Statewide Suicide Prevention Council**  
dhss.alaska.gov/suicideprevention  
907-465-6518 or 888-464-8920



With thanks to the  
**American Foundation of  
Suicide Prevention**  
for much of this content.



AFSP's site, [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org), has links to support groups and other valuable information.

*Coping with  
losing someone  
to suicide*



**Helping Our Communities Heal**

Alaska Suicide Postvention Project

Please don't try to  
cope alone...

**Please call. Help is here.**

### **Alaska's Careline**

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

[www.carelinealaska.com](http://www.carelinealaska.com)

Careline helps people in crisis, people who are grieving, and people who just need to talk. Available 24-7.

### **Hospice**

[www.HospiceOfAnchorage.org](http://www.HospiceOfAnchorage.org)

Hospice agencies all around Alaska have grief groups. Contact Hospice of Anchorage for your local hospice phone number: 907-561-5322.

### **Alaska Police and Fire Chaplains' Ministries**

1-907-272-3100

[www.apcm.org](http://www.apcm.org)

APRCM has about 100 chaplains statewide who provide services 24-7.

### **Veterans Crisis Line**

1-800-273-8255 Press 1, or text 838255,

<http://veteranscrisisline.net>

Confidential support for military members and their families and friends, 24-7.

### **Stop Suicide Alaska**

[www.stopsuicidalaska.org](http://www.stopsuicidalaska.org)

Suicide prevention and healing resources for Alaskans

### **American Foundation of Suicide Prevention**

[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

A national organization that offers prevention and coping resources for Americans.

Steps ahead...

### **Everyone grieves differently**

You may need to talk, you may need to be quiet. Keep looking until you find a source of support that matches what you need.

Understand that the way other friends and family grieve may be different. We all grieve at our own pace. Children will need special support; call 465-8536 for materials for children.

After getting through their first shock and healing, some survivors find comfort in volunteering with survivor support groups.

### **Be patient with yourself.**

It is normal to feel anger and confusion as well as the grief that comes with loss.

### **Making peace with "Why?"**

Many survivors struggle with "Why?" and "What if?"

Suicide is almost always complicated, but we do know that 90% of people who die by suicide

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"It happened...one day I changed how I thought. I used to say my son was only 23 years old and now say I was blessed with 23 years of his life; he shared those precious days with me! It was then that sleep came back to me."

-Barbara Franks, survivor

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have a mental illness such as depression or bipolar disorder.

People can die from mental illness the way they can from heart disease.

Coping

Try to keep in touch with people close to you. It may feel exhausting, but it is important.

Prepare for painful dates, like birthdays and holidays. Ask someone to be with you, or if you want to be alone, keep a number on hand to call if you need support. You can always call Careline.

When you feel ready, begin to enjoy life again. This is not a betrayal of your loved one; it is a natural step in the healing process.

