

Beatitudes for Survivors after Suicide

by LaRita Archibald

BLESSED are they that recognize suicide grief is compounded; that we grieve the death of a beloved person, but first and foremost, we grieve the cause of the death.

BLESSED are they that give us permission to mourn the loss of one dearly loved, free of judgement, censure, and shame.

BLESSED are spiritual guides who relieve our concerns for the repose of our loved one's soul with the truth that God is All-Knowing, All-Loving, and All-Forgiving.

BLESSED are they that don't offer the meaningless cliché, "Time Heals," because, for a long while, the passing of time holds no meaning or value for us.

BLESSED are they that don't say, "I know just how you feel" but instead say, "I am here for you. I will not tire of your tears or your words of sorrow and regret."

BLESSED are they that have the patience and love to listen to our repetitive obsession with WHY? without offering useless answers or explanations.

BLESSED are they that reaffirm the worth of our deceased beloved by sharing memories of his/her goodness and times of fun, laughter, and happiness.

BLESSED are the mental health care providers who explain to us that, very probably, our loved one died of a terminal illness called depression.

BLESSED are they that challenge our sense of omnipotence with the reminder that no one has enough power or control over another to cause them to end their life.

BLESSED are the first responders to our loved one's suicide who try to relieve our sense of guilt and responsibility by assuring us, "This death is not your fault."

BLESSED are they that lend acceptance to the value of the relationship we shared with the one who died by allowing us to speak of them and "what might have been."

BLESSED are they that allow and encourage us to use our loved one's death in a manner that gives our loss and grief meaning and purpose.

BLESSED are they that do not expect us to find "closure," "grief resolution," "recovery," or to "be healed," understanding that these terms define "grief work in progress" that will take the rest of our life.

BLESSED are community caregivers who direct us to suicide bereavement support groups where our anguish is understood, our loss validated, and where we are encouraged by the example of others who have travelled this road before us.

BLESSED are 'seasoned' suicide survivors who role model that not only can we survive, but, in time, we can thrive...we can regain peace of mind, restored confidence, renewed productivity, and a revived zest for living.

BLESSED are all who honour our loved ones by remembering how they lived rather than how they died.



For more brochure options, please contact the OFSA office

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Dedicated to the
Reduction of Suicide



How Do I Write an Obituary when my Loved One Died by Suicide?

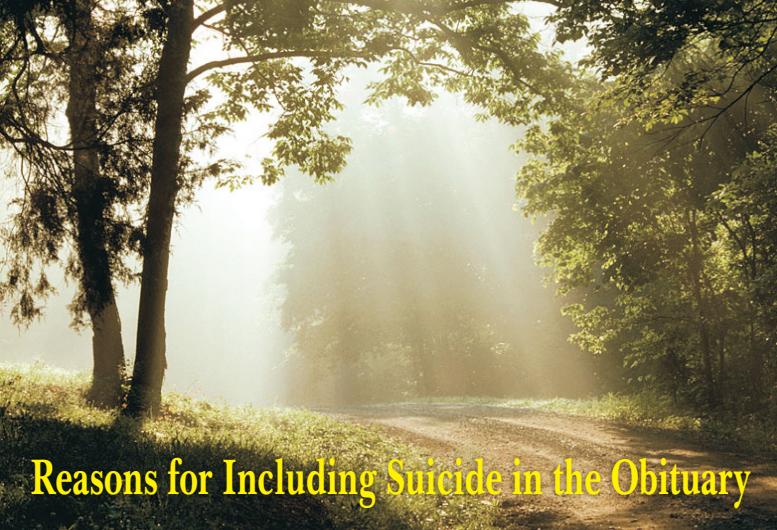
A guide to help you write an obituary

Writing the Obituary: Where to Start

After a death by suicide, one of the first decisions you and your family will make is what to include in an obituary and whether or not to include the word suicide.

Historically, suicide was never mentioned as the cause of death, but, in more recent times, some families have chosen to disclose the fact that their loved one died by suicide. The decision whether or not to disclose this information in an obituary is a personal one that only you and your family can make.

Another way to include suicide in the obituary is to suggest a donation to a suicide prevention or support group. This will leave a positive legacy, possibly prevent other deaths and help others who have also lost loved ones to suicide.



Reasons for Including Suicide in the Obituary

- . Saying the word suicide in the obituary can immediately end all the rumours and innuendos that often accompany an untimely death - especially with the suicide of a teen or young adult.
- . Saying the word suicide out loud can help begin the difficult grief process. Grief is more complicated when death is sudden and there has been no opportunity to say goodbye. When a death by suicide occurs, people experience trauma and grief. This can be overwhelming. This powerful response is made even more difficult by the stigma that is often associated with suicide.
- . Saying the word suicide allows friends and families who have also lost someone to suicide to come forward and provide support from their own personal experiences.
- . Saying the word suicide can help reduce the stigma associated with suicide.
- . An obituary is a permanent record for future generations to read. Some families who originally chose not to use the word suicide in the obituary may look back, years later, wishing they could change it.
- . Saying the word suicide may allow mental health professionals to begin postvention activities that may help prevent suicide contagion and reduce the possibility of future suicides.

What do I Say?

Here are some sample phrases or wording you might want to use

- . "John will always be remembered for his courage during difficult times. Unfortunately, this time the pain was too difficult, and John died by suicide on Saturday evening."
- . "After a courageous and long battle with depression, the pain became unbearable and Sarah took her life."
- . "Mary Lee, her life taken too soon by her own hand."
- . "John Horn, who we lost due to suicide on Wednesday April 30."
- . "Jeff died by suicide on Thursday, November 10. He was no longer just sad; he was imprisoned in a powerful darkness."
- . "On August 22, Trevor was only 17 years old when he died by suicide. Trevor will be 17 forever, and forever in our hearts."

Here are some phrases or wording to avoid

- . Suicide Prevention Organizations encourage the use of non-judgmental language. The term "died by suicide" has officially been adopted to replace "commit" or "completed" suicide which perpetuates the stigma.
- . How the suicide took place should not be included, and helps reduce copycat suicides.
- . Do not glamorize the suicide.

