

Long-Term Impacts After Surviving Suicide

Surviving a suicide attempt, or living long-term after a close suicide loss, often creates challenges that unfold over months and years. This page recognises those experiences and offers validation, strategies, and signposts to support.

1. Emotional waves: Guilt, shame, relief, fear of judgement, or anger may appear years later. These are normal, though painful, echoes of trauma.
2. Identity and meaning: Survivors often ask, 'Why am I still here?' or 'What now?' Rebuilding meaning takes time, community, and self-compassion.
3. Relationships: Trust and connection can shift after an attempt or loss. Honest, gradual conversations help repair bonds.
4. Physical health: Sleep, concentration, and energy may remain disrupted. Anchoring routines, gentle exercise, and medical review can help.
5. Stigma and silence: Fear of being judged keeps many silent. Peer groups (online and in-person) offer safe spaces to share openly.
6. Post-traumatic growth: Many survivors describe a renewed clarity of values, deeper empathy, or purpose found in helping others.

Practical supports:

- Journalling, art, or photography to process feelings over time.
- Connecting with survivor-specific organisations (see below).
- Building small, sustainable routines (sleep, meals, contact with one safe person).

UK & Scotland resources:

- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) – sobs.org.uk
- Support After Suicide Partnership – supportaftersuicide.org.uk
- NHS Inform Scotland – www.nhsinform.scot
- Samaritans – 116 123 (24/7, free)
- Combat Stress (veterans) – combatstress.org.uk

Remember: healing is not linear. Survivors can and do live meaningful, connected lives.