

Supporting Adults After Suicide Loss

1. The Shock in Adults

Even if expected, suicide often feels sudden.

Adults may feel guilt ("I should have seen it"), anger, numbness, or disbelief.

Reactions vary: some want to talk immediately, others go silent.

There is no 'right way' to grieve.

2. Common Challenges

Partners/spouses: loss of future plans, financial strain, intimacy grief.

Parents: deep self-blame, 'I failed my child.'

Siblings: often feel overlooked, expected to 'stay strong.'

Friends: may feel excluded, minimised compared to family.

Work colleagues: shock, confusion about how to continue normally.

3. What Helps Day-to-Day

Routine: meals, sleep, fresh air — helps stabilise the nervous system.

Small tasks: one step at a time (e.g. 'open post,' 'make tea').

Support networks: trusted family, safe friends, peer support groups.

Professional help: GP, counselling, bereavement services.

Grounding techniques: breathing, 5-4-3-2-1 senses, short walks.

4. Language That Helps

Say: 'I can sit with you in this.'

Say: 'It makes sense you feel this way.'

Say: 'You don't have to go through this alone.'

Avoid: 'They're in a better place.'

Avoid: 'Time heals all wounds.'

Avoid: 'You should move on.'

5. Longer-Term Needs

Anniversaries: dates may trigger fresh waves of grief.

Relationships: partners/friends may drift; new bonds take time.

Identity: some adults lose a sense of who they are without the person.

Mental health: risk of depression, PTSD, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts.

6. When to Seek Extra Help

If daily life feels impossible after several weeks.

If sleep, eating, or work stop entirely.

If suicidal thoughts are frequent.

If drinking or drugs are used heavily to cope.

Support can come from: GP, NHS urgent mental health helplines, specialist counsellors, Samaritans 116 123, Shout 85258.

7. UK & Scotland Resources

Samaritans – 116 123 (24/7, UK & ROI).

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) – helpline 0300 111 5065.

Cruse Bereavement Support – 0808 808 1677.

NHS Inform Scotland – mental health & bereavement resources.

Petals – support for parents after suicide or traumatic loss.

8. Key Reminder

You are not to blame. Suicide is complex and never caused by one person or one action.

Healing is not about forgetting — it's about learning how to live again, with love and memory held alongside the pain.