



5 Things to Say (and Not Say)

A practical & compassionate guide to support families who lost a loved one to suicide.

Yes



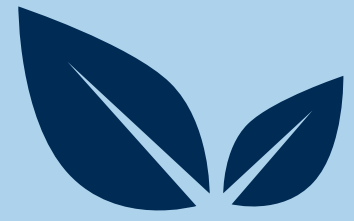
When *discussing* the death, use phrases like:

- "died by suicide"
- "took their life," or
- "chose to end their life"



Acknowledge

that you may not know what to say or do. However, don't let your discomfort stop you from reaching out.



Encourage

the person to share memories about their loved one. The most important thing is to listen or offer a shoulder to lean on.



Listen without *judgment*.

There is no right or wrong way for a grieving person to feel or behave after a suicide loss.



Offer practical assistance,

such as helping with grocery shopping, meal preparation, notifying others about the death, or assisting with funeral arrangements.

No



Avoid using "committed suicide," as it implies a criminal act and can reinforce stigma, making the grieving person feel more isolated.



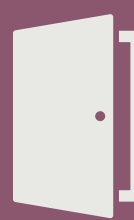
Refrain from making judgments or labeling the deceased selfish, weak, crazy, or sinful. Suicide results from extreme emotional distress, not a character defect.



Do not question or speculate about the suicide. Your role is to provide support, not interrogate the grieving person. Let them guide the conversation.



Avoid offering empty reassurances like "they're at peace now" or "they're in a better place." Such phrases rarely provide genuine comfort.



Don't shut them down.

Someone grieving a suicide might need to discuss the same points repeatedly to help them come to terms with the tragedy.