



Father's Day reaches into every corner of suicide loss grief, and it reaches different people in different ways. This handout covers the full range: people grieving a father or father figure, fathers who lost a child, fathers raising children alone after a spouse's suicide, people grieving an estranged or complicated relationship, and families carrying the weight of a father's suicide with children in the house. It draws on peer facilitation experience and published research.

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## The Range of Grief Father's Day Reaches

- Father's Day is a family-oriented holiday aimed directly at specific relationships, which means suicide loss survivors have no neutral place to stand while the world celebrates around them.
- The grief looks different depending on who you lost: a father or grandfather, a stepfather or father figure, a child, or a spouse who was a father. Each relationship carries its own weight on this day.
- Research published in *Frontiers in Public Health* found that men bereaved by suicide tend to grieve privately and feel unacknowledged as grieving people, often keeping strong to support others while their own loss goes unwitnessed.

## Complicated, Estranged, and Disenfranchised Grief

- Grief after an estranged or difficult relationship with a father includes not only the loss of who he was but the loss of what never got to be resolved. Suicide closes that door permanently, which is a loss inside a loss.
- Stepfathers, grandfathers who raised you, and other father figures who did not carry a biological or legal title are often grieved without social recognition. That is called disenfranchised grief, and it is covered in detail at [Sunflowers After Suicide](#).
- If the relationship was painful or even harmful, you may feel anger, relief, and grief in the same moment. All of those responses are legitimate. There is no standard-issue grief for a father's suicide.

## When Children Are in the Picture

- Research has found that children who lose a parent to suicide face a significantly elevated risk compared to children who lose a parent to other causes. This risk is not inevitable, but it belongs in the hands of a professional with suicide loss experience.
- One answer many parents have found helpful when talking with children: their father's brain betrayed him. He was in pain too great for his mind to find a way through. That is not a choice, and it is not something the child caused. The [AFSP's I've Lost Someone resource page](#) has specific guidance for families navigating this with children.
- The second year after a suicide loss is often harder for children than the first. Father's Day is one of those milestones that arrives year after year, and having professional support in place before it gets there matters.

## What Can Help on Father's Day After Suicide Loss

- Taking control of the day before the day takes control of you reduces the anticipatory dread that builds in the days beforehand. Having even a simple plan, with a Plan B in reserve, gives the day a shape. Our [holiday guide](#) covers this in depth.
- Stepping away from social media on Father's Day weekend is a reasonable act of self-care. A feed full of intact-family tributes can activate grief before a survivor has had a chance to prepare for the day.
- The most meaningful thing someone can offer a survivor on this day is to speak the name of the person who died, out loud and with care. If you need to talk to someone, call or text 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, available around the clock.

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### Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/fathers-day-after-suicide-loss-when-the-holiday-hurts/>