

For survivors who have lost a partner to suicide, the thought of dating again can feel impossible. The guilt, the fear of disloyalty, and the longing for connection often exist at the same time. This handout draws on peer experience and clinical research to address what makes dating particularly complicated after suicide loss and how to move forward with honesty and patience.

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## Understanding Your Reasons

- Loneliness is one of the most persistent features of losing a partner, and research on spousal bereavement shows it does not necessarily resolve with time.
- Some survivors think about dating because of financial pressure, missing physical connection, or feeling their children need more than one adult.
- Understanding your reasons helps you be honest with yourself and notice if your reason might be better served another way.

## The Weight Suicide Adds

- Many survivors carry a persistent sense of abandonment, which can feel like a rejection of everything you were to each other.
- Guilt after suicide loss can attach itself to dating in particular ways, making interest in someone new feel like disloyalty.
- Trust often needs to be rebuilt from the inside out after a suicide loss, including learning to trust your own feelings and instincts again.
- Some survivors find that hypervigilance does not switch off when a new relationship begins, and they scan new partners for warning signs.

## Children and Family Reactions

- Children of all ages may struggle when you start dating, including adult children who carry complicated feelings about how their parent died.
- Many survivors who navigate this well start by being honest with their children before they find out from someone else.
- Your late partner's family may have strong feelings about you dating again, but you are not obligated to manage their emotions on your behalf.

## What May Catch You Off Guard

- The first date can feel suddenly and viscerally like you are cheating on the person who died, with a specific physical sense of doing something wrong.
- First sexual intimacy with someone new can trigger grief, guilt, or trauma responses in ways that dating itself does not.
- You may find yourself comparing people to your late partner, which is almost unavoidable but should not become the lens through which you see everyone.

## You Are Allowed to Want This

- Opening your heart to someone new does not erase your partner or mean you loved them less.
- Grief research shows that the bond with someone who has died transforms rather than ends, and many survivors hold an ongoing connection to the person they lost while also opening their heart to someone new.
- Wanting companionship, warmth, and the comfort of being held are not small things, they are some of the most human things there are.

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### Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/dating-after-losing-a-partner-to-suicide-a-survivors-guide/>