



A celebration of life after suicide loss is a separate gathering, often held weeks or months after the funeral, built to focus on who the person was rather than how they died. This handout covers when and where to hold it, how to invite people, concrete activity ideas, and how to take care of yourself and your guests along the way.

Choosing When, Where, and Whether at All

- This kind of gathering can happen the same week, weeks or months later, on a holiday, or on an anniversary each year going forward.
- A religious facility, a restaurant, or a home can all work well, depending on the size and formality your family wants.
- Some families decide the funeral was enough and skip a separate gathering entirely, which is a complete choice, not a smaller one.

Keep the Room Pointed at the Life

- The person you lost is not defined by suicide; that is, sadly, just how the story ended.
- If you choose to name the cause of death, one brief, honest sentence early in the program is usually enough.
- AFSP's guidance on speaking safely about suicide loss is a useful gut check for keeping the focus on the life, not the final chapter.

Inviting People and Setting Expectations

- Tell people plainly what kind of gathering this is, so they arrive knowing what tone to expect.
- Ask guests to send photos or video ahead of time so there is lead time to print or include them.
- Say plainly who is welcome, children, close friends, or a wider circle, so no one stays home assuming they were not invited.

Speech and Memory-Sharing Ideas

- Simple prompts, like sharing a memory that still makes you laugh, work better than asking for one long formal eulogy.
- Offer a written option for anyone who cannot get through speaking aloud at a microphone.
- Ask one or two people ahead of time to be ready to go first, since an open floor with no one starting tends to stay empty.

Photos, Video, and Interactive Activities

- Organize photos by chapter of life rather than strict chronology, so guests naturally start telling stories as they walk past.
- Record or stream the memory-sharing time for family or friends who cannot be there in person.
- A remembrance jar, memory cards, and a simple guest book all give quiet griever a way to participate without ever speaking aloud.

A Simple Order for the Day, and Taking Care of Everyone in the Room

- A rough order, welcome, open time for photos, memory-sharing, food, closing, keeps the day from feeling like it is drifting.
 - You are grieving too; give yourself permission to step outside or hand things off to a helper when you need to.
 - The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available any time, by call or text, for you or for any guest who needs more support than a quiet conversation can offer.
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Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/celebration-of-life-after-suicide-loss/>