



Photographs, videos, and voicemails are often the most fragile things survivors have left of someone they lost, vulnerable to a crashed phone, a failed hard drive, or a carrier's automatic deletion policy. This handout offers a practical framework for backing up and preserving those memories using more than one method, so a single accident is never the reason a family loses access to them. None of it needs to happen right away or in order; even one small step counts as real protection. It can be shared with a survivor at any point after a loss, whether they are just beginning to gather scattered photos or already have a library that needs better protection.

Gather What Is Scattered Before It Is Lost

- Ask family, friends, coworkers, and teachers for any photos or videos of the person who died, since many are sitting unshared on someone else's phone.
- If a device itself is locked and inaccessible, that is a separate problem with its own answer; see [accessing a device after suicide loss](#) for that process.
- Waiting to ask does carry some risk, since phones change hands and accounts go quiet over time, but there is no deadline attached to grief itself, and this can be done whenever a survivor is ready.

Build Real Redundancy, Not Just One Backup

- The 3-2-1 rule recommends at least three copies of anything irreplaceable, across at least two types of storage, with one copy kept somewhere outside the home.
- Google Photos, Apple iCloud, and Amazon Photos each offer meaningful free or low cost storage, and using more than one avoids a single point of failure; managing the underlying accounts themselves is covered separately in [digital legacy after suicide loss](#).
- Turning on automatic backup means every new photo protects itself the moment it is taken, rather than depending on memory.

Do Not Forget Video and Voice

- Confirm that a chosen cloud service is actually backing up video, not just photos, since some plans handle the two differently.
- Save a personal copy of any memorial or tribute video found online rather than relying on the platform to keep it available forever; When Music Becomes a Bridge to Healing describes what building one can feel like.
- Voicemails are often deleted automatically within 30 to 90 days, so saving one as an audio file should happen as soon as possible.

Protect What You Can Hold in Your Hands

- A USB drive or external hard drive stored outside the home, such as in a safe deposit box, a family member's house, or a desk at work, protects against the fire, flood, or theft that could threaten a copy kept at home.
- Printed photographs do not require electricity or a password and can last for decades in a stable, dry place.
- There is no set timeline for when looking at these photographs stops being painful, and putting them away for a while is a normal response, not a failure; ritual and remembrance explores other ways to keep connection alive when a survivor is ready.

Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/preserving-photos-videos-after-suicide-loss/>