



Relief is one of the least discussed responses to a suicide loss, and one of the most misunderstood. It can surface when a person's visible suffering finally ends, when the exhausting work of caregiving finally stops, or when a relationship that caused real harm is over. This handout draws on peer experience and clinical research to help survivors and the clinicians supporting them recognize relief as a normal, non-betraying part of suicide loss grief.

Relief Does Not Mean You Didn't Care

- Relief and deep caring can exist in the same person at the same time without canceling each other out, according to [Psychology Today's overview of coping after suicide loss](#).
- Feeling relief alongside grief is not a contradiction. It often means a survivor was carrying part of the person's pain, or their own pain, for a long time before the death.
- Guilt about feeling relief tends to fold into the same should have, could have, would have loop that drives most survivor guilt, a pattern explored further in [this post on hindsight bias](#).

When Relief Comes Because Suffering Ends

- Some survivors feel relief because the person they lost is finally free of a suffering they witnessed every day and could not fix, including parents who made difficult decisions about a struggling child's care.
- Survivors who did not have the same legal ability or financial access to intervene, especially with an adult child, partner, or other adult relationship, carry a separate and equally real grief, not a lesser one.
- Understanding suicide as psychache, the unbearable psychological pain researchers describe, can help survivors separate the person's pain from any judgment about how they died. See [this post on psychache](#) for more.

The Practical Grind Behind Caregiving Exhaustion

- Doctors' appointments, medication changes, and side effects are only part of it. Researchers estimate that roughly half of people managing a serious psychiatric condition do not take medication consistently, a pattern documented in [a systematic review on medication non-adherence](#).
- A specific, often unspoken fear runs underneath long-term caregiving, the question of what happens to the person once the caregiver is gone. A [2021 paper on future care planning](#) opens with Alicia Nash, wife of mathematician John Nash, asking exactly that question about their son.
- Unemployment, insurance denials, waitlisted providers, and HIPAA barriers once a child turns eighteen add a layer of practical exhaustion to caregiving that rarely gets named as part of grief. [NAMI's guidance on HIPAA and family caregivers](#) addresses the privacy piece directly.

When Relief Follows a Difficult or Abusive Relationship

- Not every relationship before a suicide death was gentle, and relief connected to real harm someone caused does not need to be hidden, a point [Alliance of Hope's writing on complicated relationships](#) addresses directly.
- If anything about a difficult or abusive relationship still feels unsafe or unresolved, [988](#) and [The Hotline](#) at 1-800-799-7233 are both available any time, whether the harm happened years ago or more recently.
- A 2020 study in *Frontiers in Psychiatry* found an association between low self-forgiveness and higher rates of depression and suicidal thinking among suicide loss survivors, one signal among several pointing toward why [self-forgiveness work](#) matters here.

Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/relief-after-suicide-loss-why-it-doesnt-mean-you-didnt-care/>