



What to Say to Someone Who Lost Someone to Suicide: Words to Use

Many supporters of a suicide loss survivor freeze, afraid that saying the wrong thing will make an unbearable loss worse. This handout gives you the actual words to use and a checklist of concrete things you can offer, so you have something ready the next time you do not know where to start. Survivors also carry a higher risk of suicidal thoughts themselves, so this handout covers asking about safety directly. It draws on peer experience and clinical research on suicide bereavement.

Words You Can Actually Say

- “I’ve been thinking about [name] today.”
- “I know losing someone to suicide carries a pain most people never have to face.”
- “I don’t know what to say, but I’m here.”
- “This is unimaginable, and I am so sorry.”
- “Take whatever time and space you need. I’ll still be here.”
- “You don’t have to talk if you don’t want to. I’m happy to just sit with you.”

Words to Avoid

- “Everything happens for a reason.”
- “They’re in a better place.”
- “I know exactly how you feel.”
- “At least they’re not suffering anymore.”
- “You need to be strong for your family.”
- Never ask how the person died. See [What Not to Say After Suicide Loss](#) for the fuller list.

Start With Something Small

- [] I’m at the store. Can I grab you milk, bread, and coffee?
- [] I’m bringing dinner Tuesday around six. No need to talk if you’re not up for it.
- [] I’m doing a load of laundry Wednesday. I can swing by and grab yours too.
- [] I’m heading to the pharmacy anyway. Anything you need picked up?

More Ways to Help, Once You've Found a Rhythm

- [] I'll pick your kids up from school Thursday. Just tell me the address.
- [] I'm free Saturday morning. Company, or should I just drop off coffee and go?
- [] I can handle a phone call to the utility company or insurance if that would help.
- [] I'll walk your dog this week, mornings or evenings, whatever's easier.
- [] I can drive you anywhere you need to go this week. Just tell me when.
- [] I can help with the thank you cards. (Let them lead on wording, since disclosure can be complicated after a suicide loss.)
- [] I can help you look for a therapist who specializes in suicide loss. (Better offered once the first few weeks have passed.)

Staying Present Over Time

- Support often drops off around six weeks in, right when the survivor is at their most raw.
- Mark the one month, three month, and six month points, plus the first anniversary, on your own calendar.
- If you are together in person and worried about their safety, you can call or text 988 with them, not just point them to it, and stay until they are connected.
- If a survivor cannot function for a long stretch, several weeks or more with no signs of easing, gently mention professional support too.

Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/what-to-say-someone-lost-someone-suicide-words-to-use/>