



People who have lost someone to suicide often describe a strange gap between who their old friends and family expect them to be and who they actually are now. This is not confusion or a failure to heal. A significant loss can reshape identity itself, not just mood. This handout draws on peer experience and grief research to help survivors, and the people who support them, understand what reconnecting to people, hobbies, and a sense of self actually looks like after this kind of loss.

Why Reconnecting Feels So Complicated

- Identity is built partly through relationships, so losing someone central to your life can change your sense of self, not only your emotions, a pattern described in [research on identity and prolonged grief](#).
- A loss of interest in activities that used to bring joy is common after a major loss and is sometimes called anhedonia; it is a recognized part of grief, not a sign of giving up on those interests for good.
- Feeling like a stranger to yourself around people who knew you before is common, and the numbness many survivors describe is real, not a sign anything has gone wrong.

Rediscovering What Matters Now

- Starting small works better than trying to reclaim an entire identity at once. A fifteen-minute session with an old interest is enough; you do not need the exact answer of who you will become yet, only a general direction.
- Talking with a grief counselor can help you set goals that fit where you are right now and calibrate what feels realistic. Being honest, with yourself and with them, matters as much as effort does.
- A genuinely new place, one without a memory of the person you lost attached to it, can become a place of rest rather than avoidance, as described further in [our piece on exploring new roads](#).

Reconnecting With People Who Faded Away

- Some relationships fade after a loss because the other person did not know what to say, not because they stopped caring.
- A small, low-stakes gesture, like a text or a photo, is often an easier way to reconnect than a heavy, planned conversation.
- Our piece on identifying who your real helpers are can help you decide which relationships are worth rebuilding right now.

New Friends, and Some Old Ones Falling Away

- Not every relationship from before the loss can survive it, and that is not always a sign that something went wrong.
- New friendships, often from unexpected people who understand this specific kind of loss, tend to form through spaces like suicide-specific support groups.
- Grief researcher J. William Worden describes an ongoing task of mourning as building a new life while still keeping a lasting connection to the person who died, not choosing one over the other.

Source

<https://sunflowersaftersuicide.com/reconnecting-after-suicide-loss-rediscovering-who-you-are/>