

Care After Suicide
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Introduction

- A survivor of suicide loss is a person who lost someone close because of suicide.
- Our question: How do we care well for these individuals?
- “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you are also full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” (Romans 15:14)

1. Are you ready as a counselor to care well for survivors of suicide loss?

- From Jesus, we learn about the attitude of care (John 11).
 - Humble
 - Loving
 - Patient with their unbelief
 - Caring
- From Paul, we learn more about the responsibility of care (1 Cor 1:3-11).
 - We are stewards of God’s mercy and comfort (vv. 3-7).
 - We help point people to Christ as we share our suffering (vv. 8-11).

2. What do you need to know to care well for survivors of suicide loss?

- You are on the front row of the hardest ministry and care.
 - Galatians 6:2
“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:14
“...comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak...”

- Consider the burden...
 - What does the burden look like?
 - What are some of the specifics of the burden?
 - Grief
 - False Guilt
 - Anger
 - Nagging questions
 - Fear
 - Questions about Eternity (Can someone who has committed suicide go to heaven?)

- What complicates the response to the grief of being a survivor of suicide loss?
 - The death of a dream
 - Disappointment in God, self, and others
 - Fear of the unknown
 - Loss of relationship(s)
 - Loss of lifestyle
 - Fear of grief
 - Misunderstanding of theology
 - “I must smile.”
 - “I can’t be disappointed.”
 - “I can’t grieve.”
 - Yet Jesus says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Mt 6)

- Some things we can never know.

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God,...” (Deut 29:29)

- But what we do know we need to emphasize and live by.

“...but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut 29:29).

- What can we know?
 - God is good and loves us (Rom 8:31-39).
 - God is trustworthy (Gen 50:19-20).
 - God never leaves us (Josh 1:9).

3. What do you need to do to care well for survivors of suicide loss?

- Listen, listen, listen!!
- Weep with those who weep
- Help understand what is going on in suffering
 - Help identify suffering as part of the fall
 - Help to recognize God's purposes in suffering
 - Help with encouragement and hope in the suffering process
- Help them remember God and His promises
 - Remember God's presence (Matt 28:18-20; cf. Josh 1:9)
 - Remember God's purpose for living (Rom 8:29)
 - Remember God's provisions
 - His Son (1 Cor 15:55-58)
 - His Word (Ps 73:17)
 - His grace (1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 12:9)
 - His Heaven (John 14:1-6)
 - His people (1 Cor 12:12-27)
 - Remember God's plan (Rom 8:29-30)
 - Remember God's love (Rom 8:31-39; Eph 3:14-21)
 - Remember God's patience (Job; Elijah; Ps 34:17-18; 56:8; 62:8; 72:12)
 - Remember God's hope (Rom 5:1-11; 1 Thess 4:13-18)
- Common responses to encourage:
 - Be honest with God and yourself
 - Face the realities of the circumstance
 - Cry out to God
 - Turn to Christ and the body of Christ
 - Practice the presence of Christ

Implications for Counseling and the Counseling Process

- The path through grieving is not a straight path; however, God is patient and perseveres alongside us (Prov 3:5-6).
- God has big shoulders, you can trust Him (Phil 1:6).
- Weep with those who weep (Rom 12:15; cf. Eccl 3)
- Today's response is not the final response (cf. Job).
- There is a difference between a biblical lament and an unbiblical complaint.
- Connect with your counselees, and connect your counselee with others. Be with your counselees through suffering.
- Pray with them while teaching them to pray (1 Cor 10:13)
- Engage with your counselee long-term. Make yourself calendar reminders to regularly and systematically check up on them.
- Help connect them with serving others in various ways as you can.
- Use music as part of your counseling ministry to them.
- Pay close attention to where Christ is in their suffering.