Helping Children Deal with Suicide

- It is important to be honest with your children. Give the correct information in a loving, compassionate way.
- The explanation should be clear and direct. Be careful not to over explain.
- Listen carefully. Answer their questions truthfully and be consistent in telling the truth.
- Talk about the deceased family member.
- Discuss better ways than suicide to handle problems.
- Tell all your children – even the younger ones.
- Encourage children to share their grief with those at home and with trusted persons outside the family.
- Teach your children to be selective about who they tell the story of suicide.
- You can help your children grieve by letting them see your tears, by crying with them, and by letting them know that it’s okay to be upset.
- Have a positive attitude toward your children.
- Be aware of your children’s possible feelings of guilt. Assure them that it wasn’t their fault.
- Children need to know that suicide is an individual matter. Even if family members do it, they can still choose not to commit suicide.
- Children may experience all of the many emotions and phases of grief.

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