Suggestions for Families Dealing with Suicide

It is important to sit down together to experience your honest feelings. Communication is the key to survival in the aftermath of suicide. At the same time, there should be respect for each person’s individual way of handling grief. Some family members will grieve privately, others openly, and others a combination of these two styles. Here are some suggestions to help with family grief:

- Pay attention to your family members when you are with them.
- Be sensitive to how other family members feel.
- Listen to what is meant as well as what is being said.
- Accept the other person and what they say.
- Do not give each other the silent treatment. This has many negative effects.
- Sit back and listen. Let other family members have an opportunity to talk.
- Be sure to hug and touch each other at every opportunity.
- If depression, grief, or problems in your family are getting out of control, seek the advice of a counselor.
- Recognize that anniversaries, birthdays, and special holidays will be difficult for the family and each member of the family.
- Remember you can’t help anyone if you are falling apart. Do what you can do and get help for what you can’t do.
- Studies show that a bereaved person’s self-esteem can be extremely low. Survivors should help each other to think and feel good about themselves.
- If there is a suicide note, discuss as a family what to do with it: Possible options are keeping, copying or destroying the note.

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