

## BEREAVED BY SUICIDE

We know that in Ireland today there are many people grieving the loss of a loved one through suicide. Grief is a natural and normal reaction to the death or loss of someone close. Grief is unique to each individual. There is no 'right way' to grieve. Few of us are prepared for the long journey through grief, which is sometimes devastating, frightening and almost always lonely.

The initial reaction to news of a death can be one of shock, disbelief and numbness. These feelings are very normal and are nature's way of gently sedating us to give us time to begin to realise what has happened. These feelings may be even more intense when the death is sudden or unexpected.

When a death by suicide occurs, relatives of the deceased are unlikely to have had the opportunity to say goodbye. The funeral may give families the chance to arrange and plan what they feel is an appropriate farewell. This may give some sense of comfort.

## SUPPORTING THE BEREAVED

It can be difficult to know what to say to someone who has been bereaved by suicide. In Ireland, a lot of stigma around suicide still exists. Following a bereavement by suicide the family can feel very alone and lost, and may struggle to make sense of it all.

If someone close to you has been bereaved by suicide, then **SHOW YOU CARE**.

## SHOW YOU CARE

**S**TART BY OFFERING YOUR CONDOLENCES  
**H**AVE A FEW SIMPLE WORDS PREPARED  
**O**PEN UP A SPACE FOR THE PERSON TO SPEAK  
**W**AIT PATIENTLY WITHOUT INTRUSIVE QUESTIONS

**Y**OUR MERE PRESENCE IS IMPORTANT  
**O**FFER PRACTICAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT  
**U**NDERSTAND SOME DAYS WILL BE ESPECIALLY BAD

**C**ARRY OUT A SMALL ACT OF KINDNESS  
**A**CEPT THE PERSON WHERE THEY ARE AT  
**R**EMIND THE PERSON OF SUPPORTS AVAILABLE  
**E**VALUATE YOUR OWN NEEDS

### HOW THE CSEAS CAN HELP

The CSEAS is a support service which offers a wide range of free and confidential\* supports designed to assist civil servants in managing work and/or life difficulties. Employee Assistance Officers (EAOs) are available to speak to and meet with civil servants who are in any way affected by suicide.

The CSEAS website has many useful and relevant publications on health and well-being, minding your mental health, stress management and bereavement. For more information, please contact us as follows:

Phone: 0761 000 030  
email: [cseas@per.gov.ie](mailto:cseas@per.gov.ie)  
[www.cseas.per.gov.ie](http://www.cseas.per.gov.ie)

\* See website for exceptions to confidentiality.

## SUICIDE INFORMATION FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY SUICIDE

## CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE (CSEAS)

Seirbhís Chúnaimh  
d'Fhostaithe na Státseirbhíse



Civil Service Employee  
Assistance Service

Phone: 0761 000 030  
email: [cseas@per.gov.ie](mailto:cseas@per.gov.ie)  
[www.cseas.per.gov.ie](http://www.cseas.per.gov.ie)

### MISSION STATEMENT

*To offer a quality resource and support service for all staff which positively affects both individual health and well-being and organisational effectiveness*

September, 2015

## INTRODUCTION

Many of us know someone who has thought of, attempted or died by suicide. Suicide is not limited to any one particular group and has the potential to affect any one of us. Many people who are suicidal want to end their pain and suffering rather than their life.

There can be a number of reasons why someone attempts suicide. There may also be some warning signs and associated risk factors. For those bereaved by suicide, the sense of loss and grief experienced can be enormous. The question “Why did it happen?” may never be answered.

If you are concerned for yourself or someone else it is important to talk about what is going on. A timely, open and honest conversation around suicide with someone you trust can be extraordinarily helpful in highlighting the issues and the resources and supports available.

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

You might not have seen in advance any noticeable warning signs of distress in the person who has died by suicide. Although it is not possible to predict suicide, there may be some indications that a person is considering taking their life.

What you are looking out for is a significant change or difference, over a period of time, in a person’s mood or behaviour. You need to look at the change or difference in the overall context of the person you are concerned about, in order to determine if the person is at risk and experiencing serious distress.

## CHANGES IN MOOD AND BEHAVIOUR

### Warning Signs:

- A suicide attempt or other act of self-harm
- Expressing suicidal ideas/thoughts
- Uncharacteristic language
- Preoccupation with death or violence
- Loss of interest in one’s self
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Giving away personal possessions

### Risk Factors:

- Major life changing events
- Untreated mental health issues
- Diagnosis of a major physical illness
- Impulsive or risk-taking behaviour
- Relationship breakdown
- Loss through bereavement
- History of death or suicide in the family
- Access to a means of suicide

### N.B.

These warning signs and risk factors in isolation might not be a cause for concern. However, if a number are present at any particular time this may indicate that someone is really struggling.

## IT IS GOOD TO TALK IT OUT

If you are concerned for someone, the most helpful thing you can do is to talk to them about what is going on for them. Here are some ideas that may assist you with that conversation.

## TALK IT OUT

**T**HINK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE OBSERVED

**A**SK THE PERSON HOW THEY ARE

**L**ISTEN TO THEIR RESPONSE

**K**EEP THE CONVERSATION SIMPLE

**I**DENTIFY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

**T**RY TO ENCOURAGE ACCESS TO RELEVANT SERVICES

**O**FFER TO HELP IN WHATEVER WAY YOU CAN

**U**SE YOUR OWN SUPPORTS TO HELP YOURSELF

**T**ALK TO THE CSEAS FOR GUIDANCE

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

If you, or someone you know is in **crisis** right now consider contacting any of the following:

- The local GP/GP out-of-hours service
- The A&E Dept. of the local hospital
- 999/112 in the case of an emergency

There are also a number of organisations that provide information and support to anyone affected by suicide.

www.samaritans.org Tel. 116 123



www.pieta.ie See website

www.livinglinks.ie Tel. 087 4122052

www.suicideorsurvive.ie Tel. 1890 577 577