THE BATON OF HOPE

SUPPORT GUIDE



NAVIGATING *life and grief* AFTER SUICIDE

OUR GUIDE FOR ANYONE **AFFECTED BY SUICIDE**

CONTENTS

IF YOU ARE IN **CRISIS RIGHT NOW**

IF YOU HAVE LOST SOMEONE TO SUICIDE

IF YOU ARE **HAVING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE**

SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO IS SUICIDAL

FINDING HOPE AFTER LOSS OR CRISIS

A MESSAGE OF HOPE
FROM THE BATON OF HOPE





INTRODUCTION

hello

Losing someone to suicide, or experiencing suicidal thoughts yourself, can feel overwhelming and isolating. You may be struggling with shock, confusion, guilt, anger, sadness – or even numbness. **All these emotions are natural.**

At The Baton of Hope, we believe that no one should have to face this pain alone. There is always help and although hope may well be the last thing on your mind many people testify to having found hope with help and time.

This guide has been created to offer compassion, understanding, and practical support for anyone affected by suicide – directly or indirectly. From support services should you need them, to steps you can take to ensure you or someone you know can find ways to cope.

Remember, there is always hope and you are not alone.

As always, reach out as needed. Take care.

Ben Wilson

Clinical Director, The Baton of Hope

If you are having life threatening thoughts, please call 999. If you are struggling to cope, please call 111 and chose the mental health option.





IF YOU ARE IN *Crisis* RIGHT NOW

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please reach out right now: **call 999 (UK emergency services) if someone's life is at risk.**

You can **call 111 and select option 2** to speak to the dedicated mental health team.

You can also **speak to a GP** about your mental health.

You are not alone, and reaching out for help is an act of courage – not weakness.

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The following services are also available if you need to speak to someone **The Helplines Partnership** also has a dedicated online directory of helplines to help you find the right service for you, if one of the below options isn't suitable or available.

THE SAMARITANS

Free helpline available 24 hours, 365 days a year: **call 116 123.**

CALM: CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY

Free helpline available from 5pm - midnight every day: **call 0800 58 58 58.**

SHOUT

Text the word 'Shout' to 85258 for free, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.





SWITCHBOARD

Free helpline available from 10am - 10pm every day, 365 days a year, for the LGBTQIA+ community: **call 0800 01 19 100.**

THE SILVER LINE

Free helpline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for older people: **call 0800 4 70 80 90.**

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE

Free helpline available every day from 6 pm until midnight: **call 0800 587 0800.**

MIND

Support line open from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except bank holidays: **call 0300 123 3393.**

SANELINE

Out-of-hours helpline, available 4pm to 10pm every day: **call 0300 304 7000.**



IF YOU HAVE *Lost* SOMEONE TO SUICIDE

Grieving after suicide can be different from other kinds of loss. It has been described as grief with the sound turned up to a deafening volume. You may have endless questions or feel intense guilt and confusion. You might even feel relief mixed with sorrow, especially if the person had been in pain for a long time. All feelings are valid.

You might experience:

- Shock and disbelief, even if you were expecting it.
- Searching for reasons or signs you might have missed.
- Anger at the person, yourself, or others.
- Isolation or feeling that others can't understand.
- Profound depression, a sense of hopelessness and despair are experiences common to loved ones following a suicide. These can also apply unexpectedly even when you didn't know the deceased particularly well.
- Physical symptoms of grief: including exhaustion, pain, sleep changes.

WHAT CAN HELP?

- **Talk to someone you trust:** you do not have to carry this alone.
- Join a **suicide bereavement support group**.
- **Be kind to yourself:** there is no timeline or 'right' way to grieve.
- **Avoid self-blame:** suicide can be complex and often no-one is to blame.
- **Create space for remembrance:** in whatever way you wish.





IF YOU ARE HAVING *thoughts* OF SUICIDE

If you are struggling with life and thinking about suicide, please know this: **you are not alone, and your life matters.**

Many people feel this way at some point, and with the right help and understanding, things can get better – even if it doesn't feel that way right now.

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STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- **Talk to someone today:** tell a friend, family member, or a helpline.
- **Avoid isolation:** even sitting with someone helps.
- **Remove immediate means of harm:** and make your environment safe.
- **Focus on getting through the next hour**: not forever.
- **Seek professional help:** from your GP, counsellor, or crisis service.

Remember: you are loved, your pain is seen, and there are people who care deeply about your safety and your future. You may well feel that there is no hope left but there are always reasons to hope and there is always help.





Supporting SOMEONE WHO IS SUICIDAL

It can be frightening if someone tells you they are thinking about ending their life. You don't need to have all the answers – just being there, listening, and taking them seriously can save a life.

DO

- Listen without judgement.
- Take any talk of suicide seriously.
- Encourage them to seek professional help.
- Stay with them or ensure they are not alone.
- Contact emergency services if necessary (999).

DON'T

- Promise to keep suicidal thoughts a secret.
- Try to 'fix' everything or minimise their pain.
- Leave them alone in a crisis.
- Feel that you can't mention the word 'suicide'.





FINDING *Hope* AFTER LOSS OR CRISIS

Hope can seem distant, but it can grow – slowly, gently, and in small ways through:

- Connection with others who understand.
- Moments of kindness, nature, or creativity.
- Sharing your story to help others heal.
- Remembering that your loved one's life – or your own – still has meaning.
- Don't feel that you cannot mention the word 'suicide'.

At The Baton of Hope, we believe that by talking openly and compassionately, we can build a future where fewer lives are lost to suicide.

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A MESSAGE OF *Hope* FROM THE BATON OF HOPE

"There is always hope. Even when life feels unbearable, help and understanding are within reach. Please reach out. You matter and are not alone. We are carrying the baton of hope together."

