

## Groups:

Bucks County, PA:  
Aria Health/Bucks County Campus  
Development Office, Ground Floor  
380 N. Oxford Valley Rd, Langhorne, PA  
4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday 7:30Pm

St. Paul's United Methodist Church  
2131 Palomino Drive, Warrington, PA  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 7:30 PM

Chester County, PA:  
Paoli Memorial Hospital  
Paoli Medical Building, Willistown Room  
Route 30, Paoli, PA  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 7:30 PM

Delaware County, PA:  
Main Line Health Center, Comm. Rm. C  
3855 West Chester Pk (PA Rte. 3)  
Newtown Square, PA  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday 7:00 PM

Riddle Memorial Hospital, Comm. Education Center  
1068 West Baltimore Pike  
Media, PA 19063  
4<sup>th</sup> Saturday, 10 AM to Noon

Montgomery County, PA:  
Bryn Mawr Hospital, Clothier Auditorium  
Bryn Mawr Ave & County Line Rd  
Bryn Mawr, PA  
1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday 7:30 PM

Philadelphia County, PA:  
3535 Market St., Phila., PA - Rm 2037  
1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday 7:30PM

Aria Health, Torresdale Campus  
Conference Room #4  
Knights & Red Lion Rds., Phila., PA  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 7:30 PM

Camden County, NJ Barrington  
Municipal Building 229 Trenton  
Ave., Barrington NJ 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday  
7:00 pm

### **Why didn't my friend tell me?**

Some may not want to burden others with their problems. Some feel shame at being suicidal. Psychological pain is not conducive to communication. It sets its sufferers apart from those around them. Severe pain is alienating. It takes away the sense that anything can be done about it. Being suicidal is a tremendous burden. **Most suicidal individuals do not really want to die, they just want to end their pain.** Many who complete suicide struggle with this to the end.

### **Why didn't anybody do anything?**

Maybe nobody saw anything or maybe they thought the person was dealing with her or his problems or maybe they didn't want to intrude or maybe they offered help and it was turned down, or maybe the help needed was not available. Identifying and intervening with someone at risk of suicide is difficult even for those with training.

### **Does suicide loss follow any pattern?**

Every one grieves differently as a person and in terms of their relationship with the victim. A suicide loss has been described to be like a "personal 9/11."

It is common to feel powerless and helpless. This is because you have endured a sudden traumatic loss of someone close.

Gradually you will regroup, but you may always feel differently about this loss than other friends and coworkers or other suicides that you may have experienced either while you were working.

Your response may be more intense and complicated if you have lost someone to suicide previously in your personal life.

### **Will I need any kind of help?**

Everyone is different and will feel different after a suicide! Please reach out to resources (Employee Assistance Programs, mental health professionals, Chaplains, crisis centers, etc.) if you feel the need to discuss your friend/coworkers death. Do not hesitate to seek help. Support, especially from peers, is critical to recovery from suicide loss and programs such as CISM may help. Information sharing is a key element. Small group sessions at the workplace, perhaps with an outside resource person, can be useful. Debriefings are a good way to get the team together to discuss their loss.

### **What about my friend's family?**

Families also react to suicide differently. Their response depends on the victim's role in the family (i.e., parent, spouse, sibling, child, etc.), and the relationship. The family may be angry at the victim or at the organization. Remember they have suffered a terrible loss and they don't know how to feel or deal with it either. They are looking for a reason and may see job stress or other work issues as playing a part. It is best not to get into discussions about what may have caused the loss. It is enough to express your respects and show that you cared for their loved one. **Your support is very important to the family.**

Family members may especially benefit from participation in an SOS support group. This can be gently suggested when it is felt appropriate.

### About Survivors of Suicide (SOS):

SOS is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization. It started in the Philadelphia, PA area in 1983. SOS believes that sharing experiences and feelings with is the best form of help. Our mission is to offer support to individuals and families who have lost someone to suicide in the tri-state area.

#### How to Help:

SOS welcomes tax deductible donations and memorial gifts in any amount. You may designate SOS for your United Way contribution. Our number is 09449.

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Morton, PA

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SOS, Inc. thanks MCES, Inc.  
and Govan Martin for help  
in writing this brochure

# Dealing with a Suicide Loss on the Job

## Answers for emergency responders affected by a the suicide of a friend or colleague



**Survivors of Suicide, Inc.**  
**PO Box 127**  
**Morton, PA 19070**  
**215-545-2242 (VM)**  
**[sosphilly30@gmail.com](mailto:sosphilly30@gmail.com)**  
**[www.sosphilly.org](http://www.sosphilly.org)**

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### Why do I feel the way I do?

As an emergency responder you (and your co-worker who took her/his life) have probably dealt with many suicides in the course of your duties. However, none of that experience helps much when you lose one of your own to suicide. Now you and your team are feeling the hurt, sadness, and trauma.

It is very hard to understand how somebody who has dealt with suicides and other emergencies and who worked with professionals who know how to help and are always ready to help can die this way.

You are probably experiencing a wide range of emotions all growing out of saying to yourself that “This doesn’t make any sense!” Your beliefs, values, and assumptions about yourself, your job, and those you work with have been shattered and your sense of control has been weakened.

### Why do I have conflicting emotions?

You may feel betrayed, angry, guilty, and disoriented, or numb or feel nothing at all, all of which are natural. You may feel that your friend let you down. You may be angry that he or she never gave you the chance to help. You may feel that you (or someone else) should have or could have done something to prevent this. This is what happens after a suicide — Nobody is ever ready for it.

### Why did this happen?

Every suicide is different, but intense psychological pain and hopelessness can be contributing factors. Psychological pain arises when there is some seemingly irresolvable and frustrating situation. It may have been a compelling personal, interpersonal, financial problem, or something else.

Whatever the problem, it is seen as something that can’t be fixed. Coping skills fail and self-esteem is diminished. Thoughts of suicide can set in. These feelings can lead to a desire to die, then to a specific suicide plan identifying how, when, and where. This is how a suicide happens.

### Why didn't we know?

Not all suicidal individuals show clear signs of risk. Many may make some effort to hide it because they may have feared being seen as weak if they asked for help. It is difficult to determine when you are close to someone who is at very high risk of suicides.

It is very hard to accept that someone that you feel very close to, someone that you would do anything to help, may be suicidal.