
What are we to say about these things?

Thoughts on Suicide Grief

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First things:

Put these numbers into your phone!

1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
National Suicide Prevention Hotline

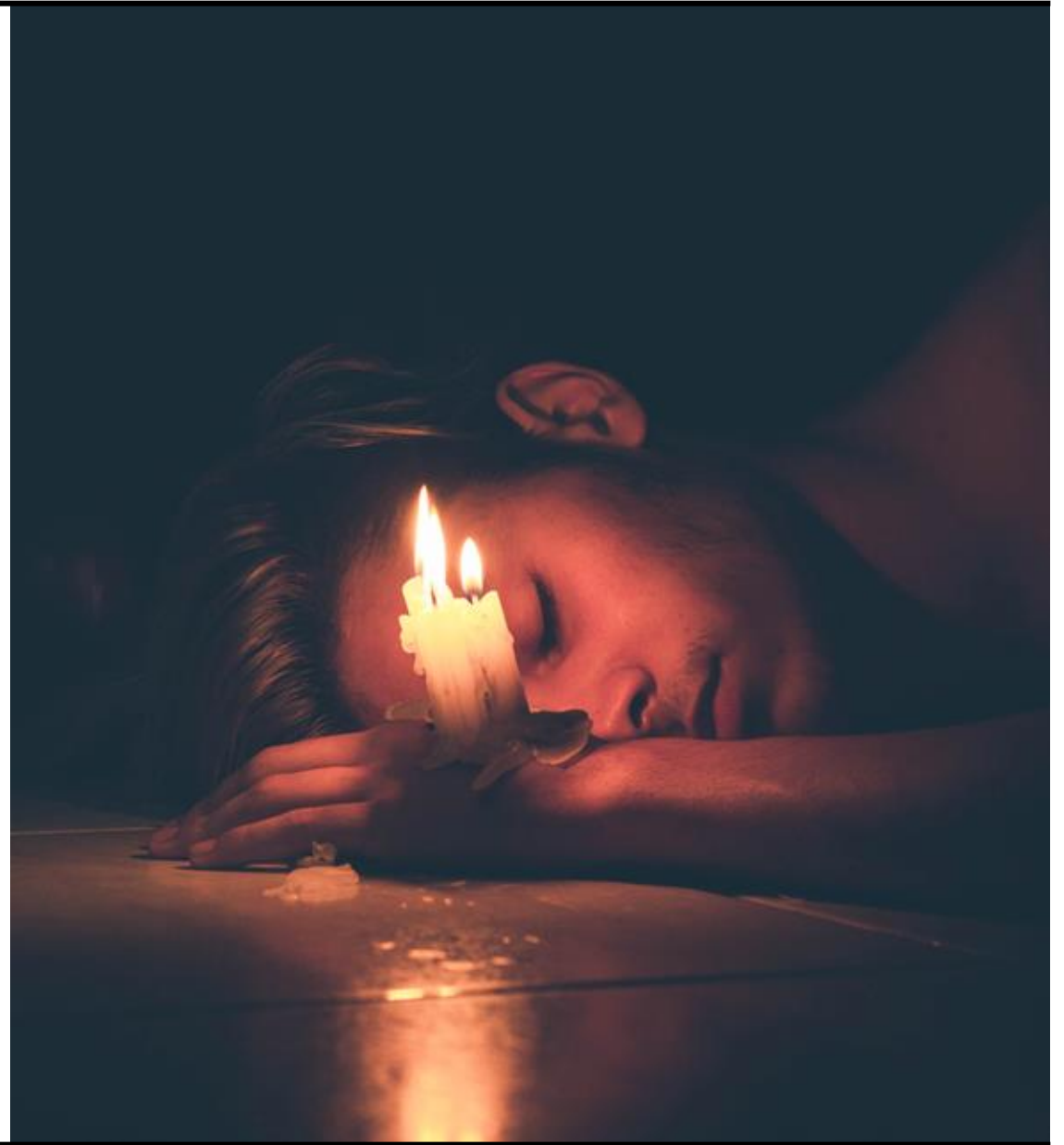
Text Talk to 741-741
(crisistextline.org)

Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386

Veteran's Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

The crisis of suicide

- *Words Matter. It is better to say “completed suicide” or “took their own life” vs. “Committed” suicide. To some survivors, “committed” sounds like a crime.*
- *Suicide is a leading cause of death for all ages*
- *45,979 deaths/ 1.2 million attempts*
- *Missouri is 13th in the nation for suicide deaths.*
- *About 1,700 persons take their own life each year in Missouri.*



Suicide grief is always complicated grief

“No matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.” – *Maya Angelou*

Complicated Grief: defined as normal grief that has strayed off course (Alan Wolfelt). Not necessarily a mental illness, but normal grief that has been accentuated by exceptionally challenging circumstances, or because of relationship factors.

Some myths:



“It was a selfish act.”

“Didn’t you see the signs?”

“Are they in heaven?”

“I wonder what went wrong in the family?”

<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/October-2018/Why-I-Don-t-Say-My-Son-%E2%80%98Committed-Suicide>

“Preachers shouldn’t mention suicide.”

“Suicide is an unforgiveable sin.”

“A person who dies by suicide cannot have a Christian funeral.”

“It’s easier for suicide survivors if you stop talking about the person who died.”

1. *Become educated about suicide prevention. (AFSP.org)*
2. *Be present for the victims of suicide; learn how to companion them in their grief.*
3. *Develop resources for congregation. Discover the power of Biblical lament*
4. *Broaden your personal capacity for resilience.*



Learning to help

Resources:

“How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies,” by T. Rando

“The Ministry of Lament,” by Gene Fowler (the late husband of Rev. Amy Fowler, and a former Giddings-Lovejoy pastor).

“Understanding Your Suicide Grief”
Alan Wolfelt

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP.org) – resources, links to support groups.

Annie’s Hope – The Center for Grieving Kids. (314-965-5015). Located in Glendale, MO.

CHADS Coalition for Mental Health (chadscoalition.org) – St. Louis based.
