

## WHEN YOU ARE READY

The **autopsy report** may be obtained by the family at no cost by writing to the Erie County Medical Examiner's office: 462 Grider Street, Buffalo, NY 14215.

### **Request must include:**

1. Your name, address and phone number
2. The name of the deceased and the date of death
3. Your relationship to the deceased
4. Your signature
5. It must be notarized

It may take approximately 12 weeks to receive a written report due to extensive medical testing (The detective working with your family may have an oral report earlier). Information is strictly confidential and not a matter of public record.

**If your loved one left a note**, you may ask the detective to give you the original or a copy.

### **REMEMBER ...\***

- Know that you can survive; you may not think so, but you can. It will take as long as it takes.
- You may be overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
- You may feel appropriate anger at the person, world, God, yourself. It's okay to express it.
- Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
- Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are in mourning.
- You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
- The choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence on another's life.
- Give yourself time to heal.
- Set your own limits and learn to say no.
- Give yourself permission to get professional help.
- Call on your personal faith to help you through.
- Struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why" or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
- Everyone grieves differently—especially in your immediate family. Be kind to each other.
- **You are not alone. Help is out there for you!**

\*Adapted from Iris M. Bolton



LIFE TRANSITIONS CENTER, INC.  
*30 Years of Hope, Comfort, Healing*

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# Suicide Bereavement Support

## ***Surviving After the Tragedy of Suicide***

*"Death leaves a heartache  
No one can heal;  
Love leaves a memory  
No one can steal."*

- Irish Tombstone

*We are so sorry for your loss.  
We have been where you are now and  
have put this pamphlet together to  
help you through this process.*

**For immediate help/support  
call 24 hours a day:**

**(585) 202-2783**

National Outreach Program

**(716) 834-3131**

Erie County Crisis Services  
OASIS Outreach Counselor

Special thanks to the Suicide Bereavement Support Group members who prepared this pamphlet (in loving memory of):  
Cathy (Greg); Marie (David); Nancy & Tammy (Todd);  
Sharan (Vinnie); and Roberta (Nick).

To download a copy of this pamphlet, log on to  
[www.lifetransitionscenter.com](http://www.lifetransitionscenter.com) and  
click on Suicide Bereavement Group

## NOW

### **When a loved one dies, what needs to be done?**

1. When you are notified of a death, call a friend, family member and/or clergy member for support.
2. Select a funeral home to assist you with preparations. Check with friends, neighbors or phone book. Ask someone you trust to go with you to the funeral home. **BE SURE** to take any life insurance policy and/or 401K information. Let the funeral director check to see if it will cover the cost of the funeral. Also be sure to take your loved one's social security number.
3. The funeral home will contact the Medical Examiner's office and take care of the release of your loved one.
4. Make a list and file any information given to you with the names and phone numbers of the people you will be talking to (such as estate lawyers, cemeteries, monuments).
5. The area where your loved one died may need to be cleaned and sanitized. Below are companies with 24 hour service that specialize in this work. (Homeowners insurance may cover the cost.)

**Advanced Bio-Treatment**    **Crime Scene Clean-up**  
1-800-860-4268                      1-800-295-5460

**Disaster Response & Restoration**                      **Kleen Scene**  
716-679-0911                      716-440-8071

### **For the Newly Bereaved:** **OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

#### **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Surviving Suicide Loss**

**Type:** National Program

**Services:** Trained volunteers meet in person with the newly bereaved and their families. They listen with compassion, recommend helpful things to read and provide information about local resources, a **Healing Guide**, and a very helpful **Financial Guide**.

**Contact for Western NY: (585) 202-2783**

or e-mail: rcarapella@afsp.org

#### **Crisis Services Trauma Response Program Serving Erie County**

**Type:** County Program—OASIS (Open Arms, Survivors Impacted by Suicide)

**Services:** Call anytime to talk, seek social services for counseling or schedule a visit with an OASIS volunteer. Available for individuals impacted by the loss of a loved one by suicide. This special group of volunteers can provide support and guidance for you and your family during this very difficult time.

**Contact: (716) 834-3131**, Ask for "Outreach Counselor."

## **SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP**

In Erie County, there is only one support group for adults after a suicide. For a listing of bereavement groups, see [www.lifetransitionscenter.com](http://www.lifetransitionscenter.com).

### **Life Transitions Center Inc.**

150 Bennett Road  
Cheektowaga, NY, 14227  
(716) 836-6460

Time: 1st Tuesday of every month

7:00pm – 8:30pm

Professionally facilitated. Walk-ins welcome. No fee, donations accepted but not required.

*Please call for referrals for individual and family counseling for children, teens & adults who have experienced a loss.*

## **HELPFUL BOOKS AND WEBSITES**

*(We hope these help you as much as they've helped us.)*

**Finding Your Way after the Suicide of Someone You Love**, by David Bisbil and Suzanne Foster, Zondervan, 2005.

**Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief**, by Martha Whitmore Hickman, Harper-Collins, 2002.

**Why Suicide—200 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Suicide, Attempted Suicide and Assisted Suicide**, by Eric Marcus, Harper-Collins, 1996.

**Touched by Suicide—Hope and Healing After Loss**, by Michael F. Myers, & Carla Fine, Gotham Books, 2006.

**Survivors of Suicide**, by Rita Robinson, New Page Books, 2001.

**Healing after the Suicide of a Loved One**, Ann Smolin, and John Guinen, Simon & Schuster, 1993.

**www.afsp.org**—American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, click on "Surviving Suicide Loss." Information about support groups, National Survivors of Suicide Day, Survivor Outreach Program, personal stories, resources and survivor research.

**www.suicidology.org**—American Association of Suicidology, click on "Suicide Loss Survivors." This includes the **SOS Handbook**, which can be downloaded as a pocket-sized, quick-reference booklet. Written by fellow survivor Jeffrey Jackson, it is brief, clear, and packed with essential information covering nearly every aspect of the survivor ordeal, including the quest for "Why?" (*Highly recommended*)