

A young woman with dark hair, wearing glasses and a purple headband, is sitting on a couch and reading a book. The background is softly blurred, showing a bookshelf. The text 'Book and Film Recommendations for Loss Survivors' is overlaid on the image in a pink box.

Book and Film Recommendations for Loss Survivors

afsp.org/books



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention

Books

Resource & Self-Help

After Suicide Loss: Coping with Your Grief

Jack Jordan, Ph.D., and Bob Baugher, Ph.D.
Caring People Press, 2016 (2nd edition)

Direct, compassionate, and practical, *After Suicide Loss* provides vital information that will benefit loss survivors – as well as mental health professionals looking to support them – in the immediate aftermath of a suicide and through the first two years and beyond. Includes strategies for coping and healing.

My Son... My Son... A Guide to Healing after Death, Loss, or Suicide

Iris Bolton, with Curtis Mitchell
Bolton Press Atlanta, 1983

Author Iris Bolton recounts the loss of her twenty-year-old son to suicide and provides advice for others who have experienced a similarly devastating loss. She explores the stigma of suicide loss, feelings of having failed as a parent, and ways to heal.

After a Suicide Death: An Activity Book for Grieving Kids

The Dougy Center for Grieving Children & Families
The Dougy Center, 2001

This activity book was designed specifically for children coping with a suicide loss. It provides creative exercises, offers practical advice, and incorporates quotations from children ranging in age from four to fourteen.

No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One

Carla Fine
Broadway Books, 1999

Drawing on the experience of losing her husband to suicide and subsequent interviews with scores of suicide loss survivors, as well as the expertise of counselors and mental health professionals, Carla Fine provides invaluable guidance to the families and friends who are left behind in the aftermath of a suicide.

Real Men Do Cry: A Quarterback's Inspiring Story of Tackling Depression and Surviving Suicide Loss

Eric Hipple, with Dr. Gloria Horsley and Dr. Heidi Horsley
Quality of Life Publishing, 2008

Former NFL quarterback for the Detroit Lions, Eric Hipple, candidly shares his experience of living through his fifteen-year-old son's suicide, his own lifelong struggle with depression, and the difficult path that led him to ultimately seek treatment.

Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide

Kay Redfield Jamison, Ph.D.
Vintage, 2000

Kay Redfield Jamison's in-depth psychological and scientific exploration of suicide traces the network of reasons underlying suicide, including the factors that interact to cause suicide, and outlines the evolving treatments available through modern medicine.

Why People Die by Suicide

Thomas Joiner, Ph.D.
Harvard University Press, 2005

Drawing on extensive clinical and epidemiological evidence, as well as personal experience, the author, who lost his father to suicide, identifies three factors that mark those most at risk of considering, attempting, or dying by suicide.

Silent Grief: Living in the Wake of Suicide

Christopher Lukas and Henry M. Seiden, Ph.D.
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007 (revised edition)

As they explore common experiences of bereavement, grief reactions, and various ways of coping, the authors emphasize the importance of sharing one's experience of "survival" with others. They encourage loss survivors to overcome the stigma or shame associated with suicide and to seek outside support.

Why Suicide? Questions and Answers about Suicide, Suicide Prevention, and Coping with the Suicide of Someone You Know

Eric Marcus
HarperOne, 2010 (revised edition)

Eric Marcus, who lost both his father and sister-in-law to suicide, addresses the myriad questions with which loss survivors are inevitably left in the wake of a loved one's suicide. The Q&A format is accessible, informative, and reassuring.

Novels & Literary Memoirs

All the Wrong Places: A Life Lost and Found

Philip Connors
W. W. Norton, 2015

All the Wrong Places is an affecting and wryly funny memoir that details the author's complex relationship with his brother and his struggle to cope with his brother's death by suicide.

I Was Here

Gayle Forman
Speak, 2016

Gayle Forman's poignant young adult novel follows Cody's search to understand why her friend Meg ended her life. The publisher describes the book as "a taut, emotional, and ultimately redemptive story about redefining the meaning of family and finding a way to move forward even in the face of unspeakable loss."

I See You Everywhere

Julia Glass

Anchor, 2009

National Book Award-winning novelist Julia Glass gracefully chronicles the complex relationship between two sisters, one steady and one restless. After one sister takes her life, the other is left to mourn the loss and find a way to go on. A spot-on portrayal of suicide loss from an author who is herself a suicide loss survivor.

The Suicide Index: Putting My Father's Death in Order

Joan Wickersham

Mariner Books, 2009

Joan Wickersham's artful memoir traces her search to understand her father's suicide through interactions with friends, doctors, and other loss survivors. An unflinching and moving exploration of the complexity of losing a loved one to suicide and the necessary search for why.

Films

The Journey: A Story of Healing and Hope and The Journey Revisited (Follow-Up Featurette)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2014-2017

Running time: 27 and 20 minutes, respectively

Family Journeys: Healing and Hope after a Suicide

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2015

Running time: 30 minutes

Life Journeys: Reclaiming Life after Loss

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2016

Running time: 28 minutes

AFSP's compelling *Journey* series of documentaries tells the stories of diverse groups of suicide loss survivors who are weathering the loss of a loved one, and finding their way back to a life rich in meaning – and even joy. The films show that, through resilience and support, loss survivors can achieve hope and understanding in their lives while celebrating the lives of those they lost. All DVDs include a discussion guide

Understanding Suicide, Supporting Children

The Dougy Center for Grieving Children & Families, 2011

Running time: 24 minutes

This heartfelt film provides insight into the emotions and experiences that children, teens, and families affected by a suicide death often experience, and offers ways to both cope and help. The DVD and guide are a resource for training purposes or for general use by parents, therapists, counselors, and other adults.

Boy Interrupted

Perry Films/HBO Documentary Films, 2009

Running time: 92 minutes

Academy Award-winning filmmaker Dana Perry explores the suicide of her fifteen-year-old son in a compelling documentary about mental illness, the family's history of suicide, and the ultimately futile struggle to keep her son from taking his life.

Here One Day

Two Suns Media, 2012

Running time: 76 minutes

Kathy Leichter searches for answers in this deeply moving film about her mother's suicide and Leichter's coming to terms with who her mother was, her mental illness, and the impact of her suicide on her extended family.

