Talking About Death and Grieving

When anyone dies it can be a difficult time, when a young person dies it can be particularly difficult. When someone dies by suicide the grieving process is the same, however, suicide can bring up some different feelings.

It is important that you understand some of the reasons why people suicide. Suicide is always complicated and involves someone usually having long term difficulties that they have struggled to talk about. People who suicide are usually experiencing a mental health issue such as depression.

Depression can lead to people feeling hopeless and can have an impact on someone’s ability to think clearly and rationally. However, many people experience depression at some point in their lives and this does not mean that they will go on to die by suicide or even consider it. It is normal for everybody to have times in their lives of feeling low, sad and confused. It’s important to talk through these kinds of feelings with someone you trust. School staff and the school counsellor are always available or you might choose to talk with a family member or a trusted friend.

Sadness, anger, confusion, guilt, numbness and disbelief are all normal feelings when someone dies. Death by suicide is a complex thing, particularly for those close to the person. Feelings of responsibility or guilt are common emotions when someone has taken their own life. However, nobody dies by suicide because of one reason or one person; nobody is to blame. In most cases the person’s difficulties and struggles go back a long time.

It's normal to feel sad; someone you cared about is no longer here and they leave a gap. Even if you weren’t close to the person, a death reminds us that everybody will die at some point and we feel sad for those who were close to the person.

It’s normal to feel angry; sometimes we experience anger with the person who has died for leaving us - it’s ok and this doesn’t mean that you don’t care about that person.

It's normal to feel confusion; any death and death by suicide can bring up lots of different feelings. Sometimes we might not know what it is we feel and we can experience a mixture of different feelings at different times.

It’s normal to feel guilt; particularly for those close to the person. You may feel like you could have done something to prevent a suicide and therefore feel responsible in some way; you may feel guilty because perhaps you argued with them about something. The reasons someone dies by suicide are more complex than this and nobody is to blame.

It's normal to feel numbness or disconnected; this is often part of shock at the news of someone’s death but can continue for a while afterwards. It is a normal response and does not mean that you didn’t or don’t care.

It's normal to feel disbelief; this is also often linked to the shock of hearing that someone has died and like the other feelings experienced around death can continue for a while afterwards. It takes time to accept that someone has gone and it takes time to adjust to life without someone.