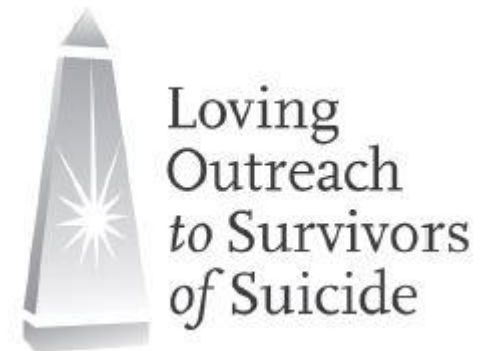


Returning to Work after Suicide Loss

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Returning to Work after Suicide Loss

- How the grief process can impact work
- The role of work in our lives
- Ambivalence about career/employment
- Relationships at work and work culture
- Utilizing the EAP

Returning to Work after Suicide Loss

- What we know about grief
 - Grieving impacts concentration
 - It is not uncommon for someone to be unable to attend to a task, to answer a question when asked, or to have time distortions when grieving
 - Even tasks that should be rote can be difficult for a grieving person
 - Grieving is work
 - Grieving a loved one takes an immense amount of energy, emotionally, intellectually, and physically
 - Grief after suicide loss
 - PTSD symptoms may be present
 - Guilt, blame, questioning all common

Returning to Work after Suicide Loss

- The role of work in our lives
 - For many adults, working is not a choice, it is a necessity
 - Returning to work could be anxiety-provoking, for others it could be comforting
 - Routines and knowing what is expected
 - Searching for meaning, something that enriches our lives
 - Increased anxiety being away from home or children

Returning to Work after Suicide Loss

- What do we hear from survivors?
 - Ambivalence: often work does not seem meaningful, survivors may feel detached from their work
 - Young adults who are launching their careers may feel more pressured to return to work and hide feelings/loss
 - How information is shared or not shared is very important
 - Some survivors find comfort in returning to work, seeing it as a “break” from their grief
 - Privacy, open work spaces, feeling exposed
 - Expectation (or perception) that you should be “over it” and “back to normal”

Returning to Work after Suicide Loss

- The role of work relationships
 - Often someone might only feel comfortable disclosing to a colleague they are close with
 - Generally necessary to tell direct supervisor due to time off requests or accommodations
 - Many people have work acquaintances but do not feel particularly close to colleagues—may not disclose at work at all.
 - May disclose the loss but not that it was suicide due to shame/stigma

Returning to Work after Suicide Loss

- The role of the EAP
 - Likely to see survivors when still in crisis, when loss is recent
 - May have some concerns about seeking assistance within the organization
 - Working with survivors on a narrative that they are comfortable with
 - Has a supervisor encouraged services through the EAP?
 - A couple personal anecdotes

Resources

- Call the LOSS Program at 312-655-7283
- Email Emily at etegenkamp@catholiccharities.net
- Monthly support groups, 8-week survivor groups, ongoing individual counseling, Obelisk newsletter



Loving
Outreach
to Survivors
of Suicide