

Supporting yourself in the days and weeks following a death by suicide

Looking after yourself is important. You may also be supporting others.

Ideas for self-care include:

- **We all grieve in our own way.** Shock, loss and grief can present in many ways. Sometimes at the beginning it can be hard to find the words to describe what you feel, or you may feel numb, as though you have no feelings. This is okay too.
- **Give yourself time to grieve.** Be kind to yourself, something big has happened and it may take some time for you to find a way forward.
- **Let others give you a hand if it feels right.** Ask for what you need.
- **Stay connected:** make time to be with others including family, whānau, friends and mates.
- **If you're spending time supporting others,** make regular time to support yourself too.

- **Take care of your health** – eat well, do some gentle exercise like stretching or walking, get regular rest and sleep and avoid heavy use of alcohol. See your GP when you need to.
- **Keep a notebook handy.** Lots can be going on and it can often be hard to focus and remember things. Write all important and helpful information down – anything you might need to remember.
- **Don't let a day go by without looking after yourself,** even in small ways.
- **Find some quiet space.** Slow down, relax, and breathe deeply. You may not want to do anything at all. This is okay too but try not to be on your own for too long.
- **Do things that you find comforting.** Kōrero, talk, listen to music, read, write. Pray or meditate if you find it helpful. Perhaps talk to a spiritual leader - a priest, minister or tōhunga.
- **Physical activity and active relaxing** can help channel and express grief. This can provide distraction and time for healing – you might like to exercise, work out or play sport. Walk and talk

with a friend. Work on a project or hobby. Make or create something.

- **Encourage yourself:** set some time aside to do the things you enjoy, even if it feels difficult. Routines can help.
- **Spend some time outside** in the fresh air and sunlight (vitamin D).
- **Talk to others who have 'been there'.** When you're ready, be open to talking with others who understand the grief and loss that follows a suicide death. You might like to join a support group.
- **Find a support person.** This could be a relative, whānau member, friend, community elder, or a counsellor (in person or anonymously through free phone counselling options).
- **Free phone counselling options** include free call or **text 1737** to talk to a trained counsellor anytime. There is also Lifeline, Youthline or Samaritans.
- **Help is available.** If you need it, reach out and find what support may be available for you or ask if someone can help you find the support you need. Call or text 1737 to help you find your local support options, or talk with your Victim Support worker, GP, medical

We know this is a difficult time. You may have lots of questions.

At www.aftersuicide.nz you can find information about:

- What to do when you hear about a suicide
- Letting others know
- Dealing with the practical
- Official processes and people involved
- Looking after yourself and others
- Getting ongoing help and support

When you are ready the website www.aftersuicide.nz is there.