



You are not alone.

Approximately 9,000 people in Germany die by suicide every year.

Men and women, people who are healthy or ill, people of all ages, and people in a wide range of life situations are affected. The reasons and circumstances behind each suicide are unique; some may be understandable to those left behind, while others remain unclear. Most importantly, no one has the right to blame you or your family—not even yourself.

This leaflet provides initial information about what you may encounter following a suicide and where you can find support during this difficult time.



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Gefördert durch:



aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages



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Support & further information:

YOU CAN FIND SUPPORT HERE:

AGUS – Suicide Survivors (AGUS e.V.)

Kreuz 40 | 95445 Bayreuth | Tel. 0921-150 03 80

E-Mail: kontakt@agus-selbsthilfe.de

A support organization for people who have lost a close relative to suicide, with over 85 self-help groups nationwide.

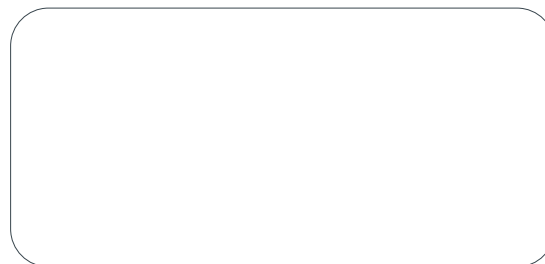
Telephone counselling service:

0800-1110111 or 0800-1110222

Free of charge. Counsellors are available 24/7 and can also provide information about support services in your area.

Informationen aus Ihrer Region.

LOCAL SUPPORT SERVICES:

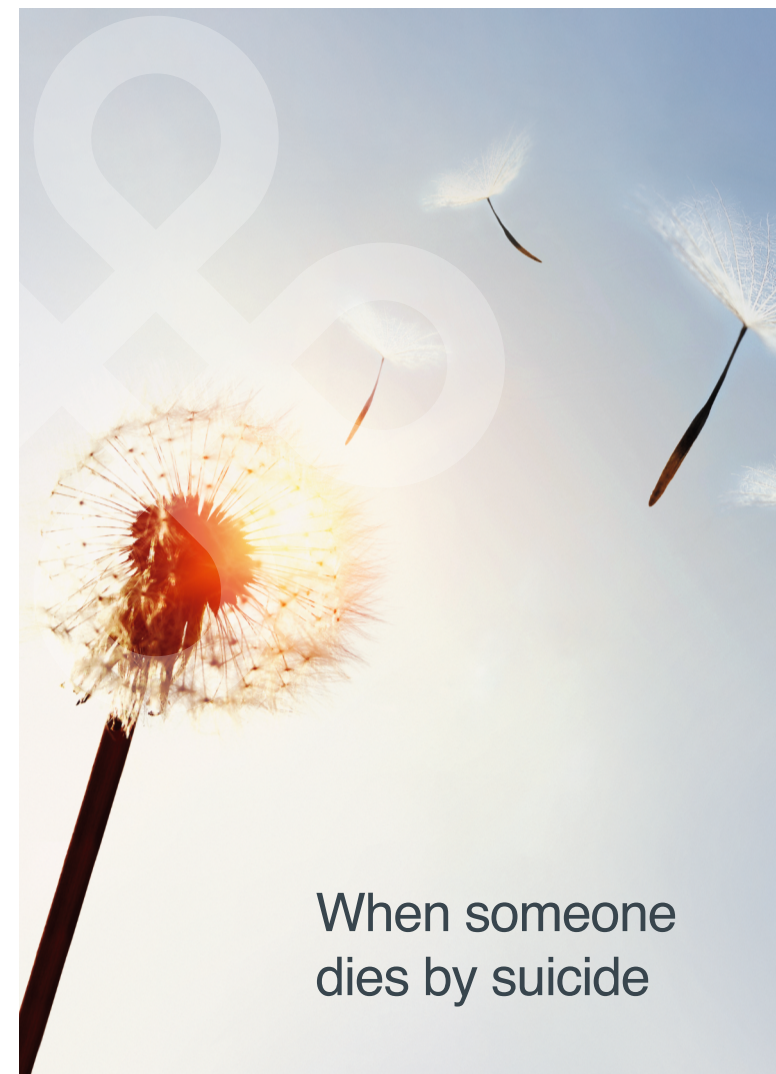


FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.agus-selbsthilfe.de

www.suizidprophylaxe.de

www.suizidpraevention.de



When someone dies by suicide

**SUPPORT FOR SUICIDE SURVI-
VORS**
IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS

A FIRST STEP:

Accepting feelings and thoughts.

Feelings such as helplessness, blame, pain, guilt, numbness, or grief are common. The sudden death of a loved one can trigger a wide range of intense and overwhelming emotions. Tears, anger, or confusion are natural responses—they are human reactions.

These emotional responses are often accompanied by physical symptoms such as difficulty sleeping, feeling cold, loss of appetite, or headaches.

One of the most helpful things during this time is to be with others who share your shock and grief. If possible, try to reach out to them.



YOUR SUPPORT:

Let others help you.

You do not have to go through this difficult time alone. Think about whether there are friends or neighbours you can ask for help, and do so as early as possible. People are often grateful when you let them know what you need.

If you have children, inform trusted adults who can support them during the first few days. This will give you the time and space to take care of necessary arrangements.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Police procedures.

It may come as a surprise, but the police are required to investigate every suicide in order to rule out the possibility of a crime. This is standard procedure and does not mean that you are under suspicion.

Important information is collected and passed on to the public prosecutor's office to exclude other possible causes of death, such as an accident or homicide. These investigations usually take at least two to three days.



What happens during this time:

- Suicide survivors are asked—usually at home—about possible circumstances surrounding the suicide and the deceased person's background.
- Personal items, such as a diary or a farewell note, may be temporarily taken as evidence.
- In some cases, suicide survivors or friends may be asked to identify the deceased. You have the right to decline and ask someone else to do this.
- The body is taken into custody and externally examined by a forensic specialist. In some cases, an autopsy may be carried out.
- In most cases, the body is released after a few days and can be transferred to a funeral home of your choice.
- Personal belongings of the deceased are returned once the investigation has been completed.

TALK OPENLY:

Supporting children and young people.

Do not be afraid to talk openly with children and young people about suicide. They want to understand what is happening around them.



If a parent or sibling has died by suicide, it is especially important for the surviving adults to remain reliable and trustworthy. Maintaining daily routines as much as possible can help children feel safe and supported.

Young people often prefer to talk to friends rather than parents about their thoughts and feelings. Give them time and space to process death, grief, and suicide in their own way.

Further guidance on supporting bereaved children and young people can be found in AGUS leaflets and brochures.

Funeral and farewell.

Once the body has been released, you have the right to spend time saying goodbye at home or at a funeral home. Funeral directors can explain the available options in detail.

Today, both clergy and independent celebrants conduct funeral services for people who have died by suicide without prejudice. As suicide survivors, you are free to decide whether and how to address the cause of death during the funeral or in obituaries.