



Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
286 Water Street
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel. (207) 287-8016
Fax (207) 287-9058; TTY (800) 606-0215

Dear Friend:

I am writing to extend my sincerest sympathy to you on the loss of your loved one to suicide. The death of someone close brings sorrow - but a death from suicide can be especially anguishing and traumatic. The unexpected loss of a family member or friend can throw a person's world into chaos and may bring up feelings not usually experienced with other deaths.

As hard as it is, please know that you are not alone; even though you may feel it right now. Family members and friends who lost someone to suicide are called suicide survivors. An estimated 4.5 million people became suicide survivors in the last 25 years in the United States. Some survivors have shared their journey of grief and healing so that newly bereaved families and friends of suicide victims would have resources not available when they experienced their loss. The Maine Suicide Prevention Program (MSPP) has an informational kit for family members and others who have experienced the suicide of a loved one.

In the kit you will find:

- *A list of books written by those who lost a child, partner, sibling, or close friend to suicide*
- *Web sites with information on the grief process for those persons left behind after a suicide, including e-mail support groups, memorials, etc.*
- *A list of Maine grief support centers with contact information and services provided*
- *A Handbook for Survivors of Suicide*
- *Original works by survivors in Maine*
- *Beyond Surviving and The Phases of Grief*

Knowing that everyone grieves differently, I hope you will look at these materials when you feel ready, and find some support. You may decide to share this information with others. Take the time you need, don't be afraid or shy to ask for help and understanding - be gentle with yourself as you grieve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katharyn B. Zwicker". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

*Katharyn Zwicker, Coordinator, Maine Suicide Prevention Program
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Department of Health and Human Services*

The Maine Suicide Prevention Program is coordinated by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services. For more information and resources, contact the Information Resource Center at 1-800-499-0027 or www.mainesuicideprevention.org