

SUPPORTING LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE DURING PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SUICIDE LOSS

Sometimes the media, social media or broader LGBTIQ+ communities will be engaged in public discussions about suicide loss. It may be that a well-known LGBTIQ+ person suicides or that a report on suicide is being released. It can be difficult during these times for LGBTIQ+ people who have been bereaved.

This fact sheet provides information about supporting LGBTIQ+ people, particularly LGBTIQ+ people bereaved through suicide, when discussions about suicide are widely spread through media.



PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SUICIDE LOSS

When loss through suicide is talked about in the public domain, it is appropriate for bereaved people to feel new waves of sadness, anger, regret, guilt, or a range of other strong emotions. Interacting with content about suicide may connect someone with their feelings of grief – sometimes it can disconnect someone from their feelings and leave someone feeling numb.

We hear from LGBTIQ+ people who are bereaved that seeking out of information about suicide

loss can be an important part of making sense of a suicide. For others, unintentionally reading, hearing or watching content that they ordinarily would avoid can be shocking. Content may bring back unwanted memories about the time following their loved one's death. It may create new questions that need processing for someone who is bereaved. Grief is a continuous process – when we find out new information we find new ways of understanding our loss. This may mean grieving loss or suicide in different or new ways.



Switchboard Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

charlee.org.au

Charlee is a project of Switchboard Victoria, which is based on the lands of the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung peoples.

We acknowledge that our work takes place on lands that are under colonial occupation and that sovereignty has never been ceded. We hope to pay our deepest respects to Boon Wurrung elders, past and present, and wish to extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People across this Country we know as Australia

TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE LOSS

There used to be a belief that talking about someone suiciding was wrong, that it might influence others to consider taking their life. What we now know is that talking about suicide can help people who are bereaved to connect with feelings of loss and support people to seek help who are distressed.

Feelings of disconnection and isolation can mean we experience difficulties with engaging to the important or meaningful parts of who we are and how we feel. For example, impacts of loss through suicide can make people feel they do not want to be social with others, due to fear of feeling like they have to talk about the loss. This disengagement can lead to further loss of community connection or creativity, which are important to selfcare, identity and wellbeing.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

You can talk with your close friends about this. We know, as a community, we are more likely to seek emotional support from our queer friends during times of grief. Many within our community are familiar with the topics of suicide, friends and friendship, connections, supporting people, and loss and grief way more than other people do. Some may well be familiar with the feelings around suicide and may have already lost someone themselves.

We shouldn't be afraid of giving each other support, but people may need to make sure that their support is useful. It might help to share some simple guidance, like this fact sheet or our resource *How to Talk About LGBTIQ+ Suicide Safely*, to steer the conversation away from unhelpful outcomes.

People shouldn't have the legitimacy of their grief questioned depending on how they understood their relationship to be with the deceased. If someone is having feelings, those feelings are real and processing them will help.

ENGAGING IN PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS

It is recommended that workplaces, individuals and agencies who are communicating about suicide defer to safe principles for communicating about suicide. We recommend reading our resource *How to Talk About LGBTIQ+ Suicide Safely* which provides clear guidelines for appropriate language use, and speaking about suicide in ways that are informed by understanding how to best approach talking about suicide.

If you are feeling deeply affected, it can be helpful to talk to someone supportive about your feelings. You may already have support for your mental health in place, or you may never have accessed counselling or therapy before. Even a one-off session talking about your feelings with a professional who supports you can make a difference.

Need support

QLIFE

Phone: 1800 184 527

Website: [www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)

Hours: 3pm-Midnight (AEST), 365 days a year

QLIFE is an anonymous, free, national peer-support telephone and web-chat service for LGBTIQ+ and questioning people, their families and communities.

Rainbow Door (Victoria)

Phone: 1800 729 367

Text: 0480 017 246 sofa

Email: support@rainbowdoor.org.au

Website: www.rainbowdoor.org.au

Opening hours: 10am-5pm, 7 days a week

Rainbow Door is a Victorian-based, free LGBTIQ+ helpline. Rainbow Door provides information, support, and referral by trained counsellors and can speak to people about suicidal thoughts, concern for others, or bereavement by suicide.