

# SurvivorVoices

## A talking circle about suicide loss



Training Professionals & Communities in  
Suicide Prevention & Response®

SurvivorVoices: a Talking Circle about Suicide Loss, is a National Best Practice program that teaches those bereaved by suicide how to speak safely and effectively about their loss. Survivors of suicide loss are key partners in suicide prevention and postvention. No one is more passionate about preventing further suicides and letting other survivors know they are not alone.

Stories of suicide loss told from the heart are powerful. They promote healing for those who are newly bereaved, educate the public about how to support survivors of suicide loss, and increase awareness of suicide risk factors and warning signs.

While some individuals who take SurvivorVoices may never share their story publicly, participation in the training helps them with their own grief process and connects them with other survivors. For those who go on to share their stories publicly, they often use this new connectedness to energize suicide prevention and bereavement support efforts (e.g. starting a survivor of suicide loss support group, hosting a teleconference site, starting a Life Keeper quilt project, initiating a suicide awareness event).

The training prepares each participant to tell his or her story safely. Research shows that the words and content used to speak about suicide can be very influential in both positive and negative ways. While unsafe language can inadvertently put vulnerable individuals at higher risk for suicide, speakers who adhere to safe messaging in a carefully prepared story serve to educate others about suicide, reduce stigma and increase helping seeking for mental illness.

The process of sharing stories and messages is very personal and intense. The training encourages and promotes mutual support and healing among participants. The small group size of no more than eight survivors allows time for sharing and caring. Participants will be interviewed to ensure they are emotionally ready to tell their story without having a setback in their own healing.

### SurvivorVoices training highlights:

- How to safely and effectively tell one's story of suicide loss publicly and privately
- Best practices and guidelines on safe messaging, media recommendations for reporting on suicide, and memorial or funeral services
- Greater comfort in telling one's story after having practiced it in a safe environment
- How to shape one's message for a general or specific audience
- How to safely respond to questions from audience or media
- Familiarity with suicide data, risk factors and warning signs, and resources for survivors and suicide prevention

**Length:** Two days or tailored for specific audiences.

**Train-the-Trainer** in SurvivorVoices available in a three day format.

**Audience:** Survivors of suicide loss who are interested in learning how to tell their story safely in public or private settings. Although each person grieves at his or her own pace, most survivors find that it takes at least two years after their loss before they are ready to share their story publicly.

**Location:** your community

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