After the Crisis

When a friend or family member attempts to take his own life, it is traumatic for everyone. There are a lot of emotions that can arise - shock, fear, relief, denial, anger, guilt, shame, sadness, helplessness. Learning how to effectively handle these emotions is important in getting to a place of wellness - for everyone. Counseling or talking to someone you trust can help you process these emotions.

- **Don’t blame the survivor. Don’t blame yourself.**
  - No one is at fault.
- **Don’t expect him to instantly get well.**
  - The goal of the emergency room is to stabilize the patient and make referrals for follow-up care. **Follow-up care is critical for recovery.**
  - Treatment usually involves working with a doctor and counselor to find the right combination of medications and counseling that works for the individual.
  - A person who attempts suicide will not always be suicidal but they are at increased risk for a repeat attempt - particularly, in the short-term.
- **Become educated.**
  - Be informed about suicide. Know what it is. Know what it isn’t.
  - Get counseling for family members.
- **Know your role in his safety plan which will identify:**
  1. His warning signs and triggers.
  2. Activities that he can do to take his mind off his problems like going for a walk, listening to music, or playing with a pet.
  3. People and places that can provide distraction like going fishing with a buddy, playing basketball with friends, or hanging out at the coffee shop.
  4. People he can ask for help like a friend, brother, coach, pastor, or counselor.
  5. Contacts who can respond to a crisis.
- **Reduce risk at home.**
  - Remove or lock up guns and prescription painkillers.
  - Limit access to alcohol.
- **Take care of yourself.**
  - Take timeout to regain your bearings. Don’t obsess about his situation. Talk to someone you trust.
- **Keep the National Suicide Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 readily available.**

Suicide is very much preventable. For more information, go to HelpHimStay.org.