Support after a suicide on campus [1]

Dear Alice,

How can students get support after a suicide on campus?

Answer
Dear Reader,

It's very normal and, in fact, expected for the friends, family members, colleagues, and acquaintances of a suicide victim to feel a range of emotions after a suicide. Shock, confusion, anger, guilt, sadness, and denial are all common, as well as experiencing nightmares, flashbacks of the person, social withdrawal, sleep problems, difficulty concentrating, and loss of interest in daily activities or hobbies. To help students manage and understand these symptoms of grief and confusion, Columbia provides students with counseling and support to help process and eventually heal from this type of community tragedy.

A primary provider of services to Columbia students is Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) [2], which offers private counseling, bereavement groups [3], regular office hours, evening residential hall walk-in hours, and after-hours clinician on call [4]. To meet with a counselor one-on-one, you can call x4-2878 to make an appointment. For urgent mental health concerns after hours you can call x4-9797, or go directly to the emergency room at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital at 114th Street and Amsterdam. If you feel more comfortable discussing your reactions to a suicide with a primary care provider, you can make an appointment by logging on to Open Communicator [5], or calling x4-2284. You can also speak with your Advising Dean, the Office of the University Chaplain [6], or anyone in the Office of Residential Programs [7], including your floor's RA.

In addition to seeking professional support, it might be useful to talk about what you're going through with friends, family, your faith community, or a trusted professor or advisor. While it may be tempting to withdraw into isolation during this difficult time, the support of your community can help you process, understand, and express your emotions.

Making use of the resources that Columbia offers may help you cope with feelings and reactions related to a suicide within Columbia's community. It's also important to grieve in your own way, and to do what feels right for you. Losing someone to suicide is a tremendous loss, and healing must occur in ways appropriate to you, at your own pace.

Alice!

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If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

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