

Your Personal Story...

1. Please answer Yes or No to describe your experience with suicide:

I am:

- a) a Suicide Attempt Survivor:
- b) Bereaved by suicide: YES
- c) a Carer for someone who is or was suicidal:
- d) Other:

2. What is your experience with suicide? (*This your opportunity to tell your personal story in whatever detail you would like*)

I lost my 24 year old son to suicide 2 days after he moved out of home to go and live with his girlfriend. My son never suffered depression or mental illness, a fact that has been confirmed by our GP who treated him all of his life, but after a lot went wrong in 3 days, on the night he died he drank 17 bottles of full strength beer and jumped from the cliffs at Cape Banks, he was frightened of heights !!

3. How have your relationships with friends, family, peers, or your community been affected by your experience with suicide?

I have very loving, caring and supportive family and friends, three very old friends have been a great disappointment to me.

4. How has your health and well-being (e.g. sense of self, sense of purpose, emotional stability, physical and mental health) been affected by your experience with suicide?

I suffer from rheumatoid arthritis and shortly after my son's death I could not get out of bed, actually could not move.

5. How has your financial situation, education, employment, or living circumstances been affected by your experience with suicide?

My living circumstances will never be the same I will miss my son until my last breath.

6. What was your experience of services available to help those at risk or affected by suicide? Do you have any suggestions about how to improve these services or make them easier to access?

I received excellent support from the Support After Suicide Group from the Coroner's Court and also one on one from the Bereavement Centre at Calvary Hospital.

7. What was your experience of services available from emergency departments, coroner's courts, and law enforcement agencies (e.g. police) to help those at risk or affected by suicide? Do you have any suggestions about how to improve these services or make them easier to access?

Coroners Court excellent, police ? I had to wait 3 weeks to read a note my son had left for me, I chased them for everything but all in all they were not too bad.

8. What support mechanisms have helped you to move forward after your experience with suicide? What has helped you to build resilience?

My determination that it will not beat me.

9. In your experience, do you think people are prepared to talk openly about suicide or to help someone at risk of suicide? Where your answer is no, do you have any suggestions about how to improve this?

I don't know most people find suicide difficult to talk about. I talk openly about my son all of the time.

10. Some people say that having their voice heard is important for their healing after their experience with suicide. Do you agree with this? If so, why do you feel that way and how would you like to be heard?

Yes. I made sure I followed everything through, had police reports corrected where errors were made.

11. Are you aware of any public awareness programs that provide information, encourage help-seeking and enhance public discussion of suicide? If so, how effective have you found these programs?

I have not been involved.

12. Have you changed as a result of your experience with suicide? If yes, describe the main changes.

I am not more tolerant and understanding of people who take their lives.

13. If there was only *one thing* you could say to the Senate Inquiry Committee what would it be?

Give me back my son.

14. Please add any other information that you feel is important to your story...

Perhaps more education in homes and schools about suicide.