

Am I Ready to Tell My Story?

Am I ready to speak? Have I healed enough to speak?

- Remember that if you don't want to tell your story, you don't have to. While some people feel it's important to share, that isn't true for everyone.
- Give yourself time to heal from your loss to gain perspective from your experience. Know the difference between healing yourself and helping others. Allow yourself possibly several years after your loss before making public presentations.
- Consider seeking a consultation with a mental health or other clinician to assess whether it is an appropriate time for you to become a public speaker.

Am I prepared for my family's reaction to my going public?

- It is important to realize that not all of your family members may be accepting of your telling the story of a loved one's suicide. They may be in different places emotionally or have different feelings about privacy.
- Before you go public, you may want to speak to your family members to learn their feelings. In the end, this is your story, not that of family members, and it is your decision to make. However, you may want to consider closely your comfort level and what impact telling your story publicly will have on them.

Am I prepared for the social ramifications of going public with my story?

- Given the instant and widespread access to information through the Internet and social media, consider the long-term ramifications of going public with your story, such as the potential for loss of privacy in your future personal and business life. Remember, you always have the choice about how public you want to make your story. You are free to set limits on any recording that might take place at your presentation. Some people find it easier to present to groups they don't know due to the perceived level of anonymity it affords. Others prefer to speak only to people/groups they know as they feel more comfortable and assured they will receive support.

Know your resources

- It is very important for you to read and adhere to Safe Messaging Guidelines. These guidelines are based on the best available research and address the complexities of talking publicly about suicide and the steps for doing so safely.
- Refer to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-TALK (8255) which is a national suicide crisis hotline; and emphasize that it is for those who need help and for those who care about someone who needs help. Also, be sure to mention the Crisis Text Line: 741-741

