


TAP*S
TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

***Intimate Partners and Suicide:
Finding Hope When the Unthinkable Happens***

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Presented by Boeing 

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Learning Objectives — Isolating Factors — Common Emotions — Layers of Impact — How to Help

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This slide shows the TAPS logo and a navigation menu with five items: Learning Objectives, Isolating Factors, Common Emotions, Layers of Impact, and How to Help. The background features a photograph of a group of people in red shirts standing in front of a large stone monument.

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Learning Objectives — Isolating Factors — Common Emotions

Learning Objectives

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This slide is identical to slide 3, but the 'Learning Objectives' item in the navigation menu is highlighted with a green checkmark icon, indicating it is the current topic.

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Two Core Learning Objectives



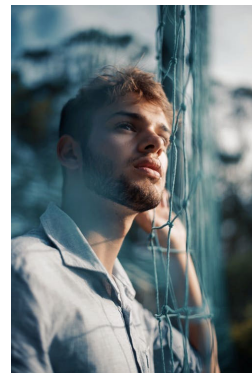
1. Describe two factors that can create a uniquely isolating experience for current and prior service military spouses who have lost a partner to suicide.



2. Identify at least two very practical ways to support those in close relationships who have lost a spouse or partner to suicide.

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Whose Pain Are We Addressing?



Anyone who has lost a close relationship partner to suicide: whether female, male, married, engaged, or partnered

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A Uniquely Challenging Grief Journey

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- Learning Objectives
- Isolating Factors
- Common Emotions
- Layers of Impact
- How to Help

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Learning Objectives — **Isolating Factors** — Common Emotions — Lay Im

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Isolating Factors


Following the suicide of a spouse or partner, there are 3 factors (or “splits”) that often isolate survivors







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Intimate Partners of All Kinds




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Attachment Trauma



Is often directly related to the suicide

Often pre-dates the suicide

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Ambiguous Loss

Leaving
Without
Good-Bye

Good-Bye
Without
Leaving

**Physical Absence
with
Psychological Presence**

Examples:
 War (missing soldiers, civilians)
 Natural disasters (missing persons)
 Kidnapping, hostage-taking, terrorism
 Desertion, mysterious disappearance
 Missing body (murder, plane crash, lost at sea)
 Incarceration
 Suicide
 Immigration, migration, expatriate
 Adoption, foster care
 Divorce
 Work relocation
 Military deployment
 Young adults leaving home
 Elderly mate or child moving to care facility
 Miscarriage
 Infertility

**Psychological Absence
with
Physical Presence**

Examples:
 Dementia, Parkinson's disease, brain injury
 Coma
 Chronic mental illness
 Depression
 Unresolved grief
 Homesickness (immigration, migration)
 Addictions: drugs, alcohol, gambling
 Hoarding disorder
 Preoccupation with lost persons, work
 Obsession with computer games, Internet, TV
 Autism

Boss, P. and Yeats, J. (2014). *Ambiguous loss: A complicated type of grief when loved ones disappear*. In *Bereavement Care* 33(2):63-69

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**Learning
Objectives**

**Isolating
Factors**

**Common
Emotions**

**Layers of
Impact**

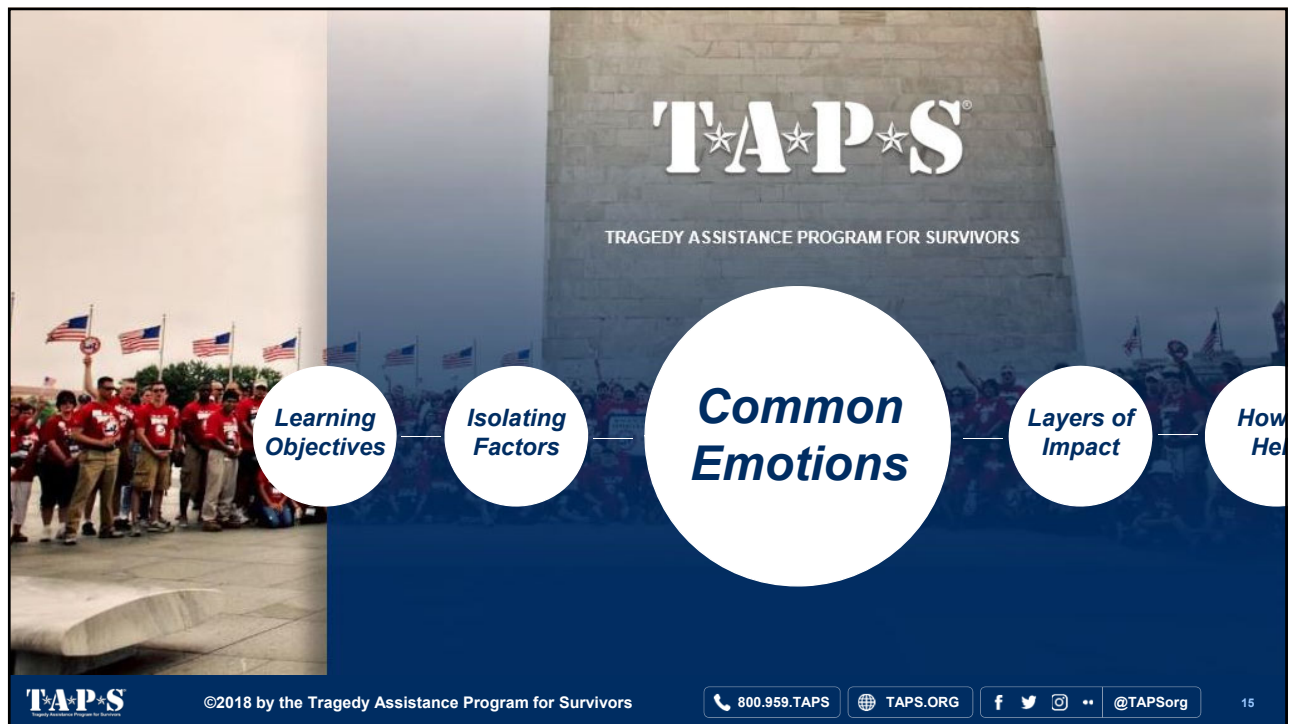
**How to
Help**

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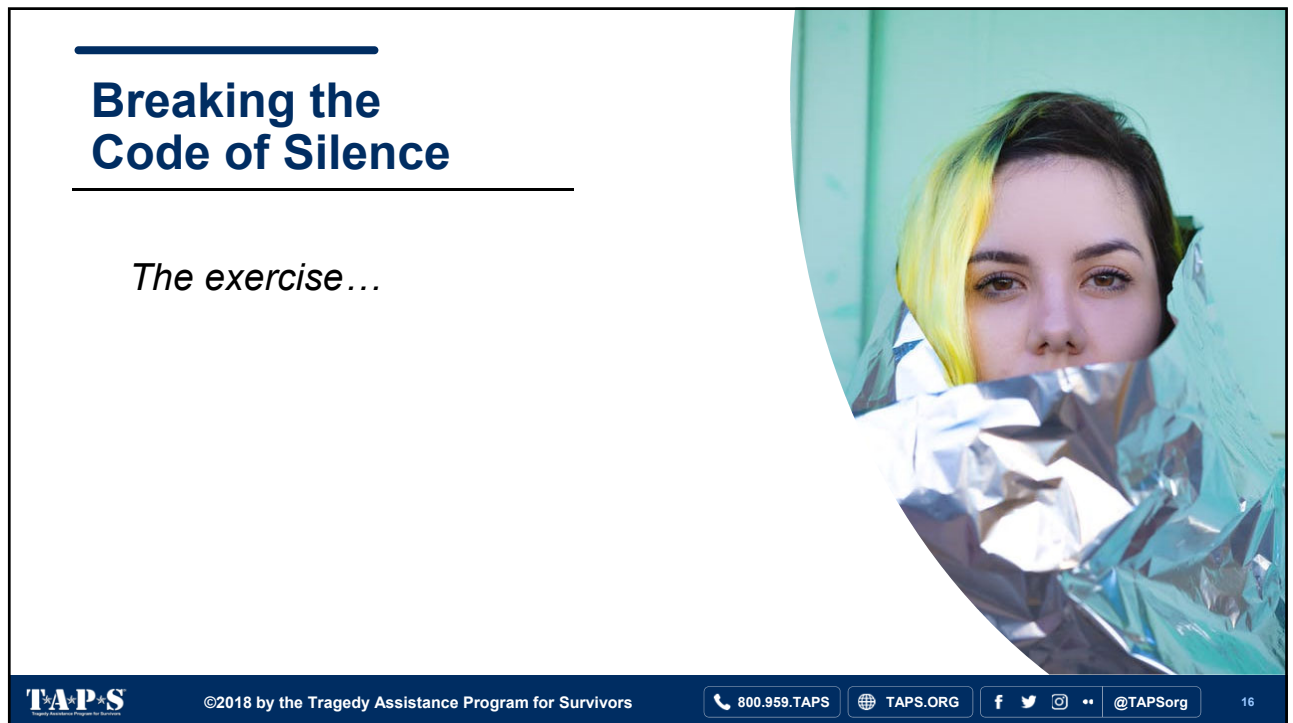


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Learning Objectives — Isolating Factors — **Common Emotions** — Layers of Impact — How He

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Breaking the Code of Silence

The exercise...

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Learning Objectives — Isolating Factors — Common Emotions — Layers of Impact — How to Help

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This slide features the TAPS logo at the top center, with the full name 'TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS' below it. A horizontal navigation bar contains five white circular buttons with blue text: 'Learning Objectives', 'Isolating Factors', 'Common Emotions', 'Layers of Impact', and 'How to Help'. The background is a blue-tinted image of a crowd at a memorial. The footer includes the TAPS logo, copyright notice, contact information, and social media icons.

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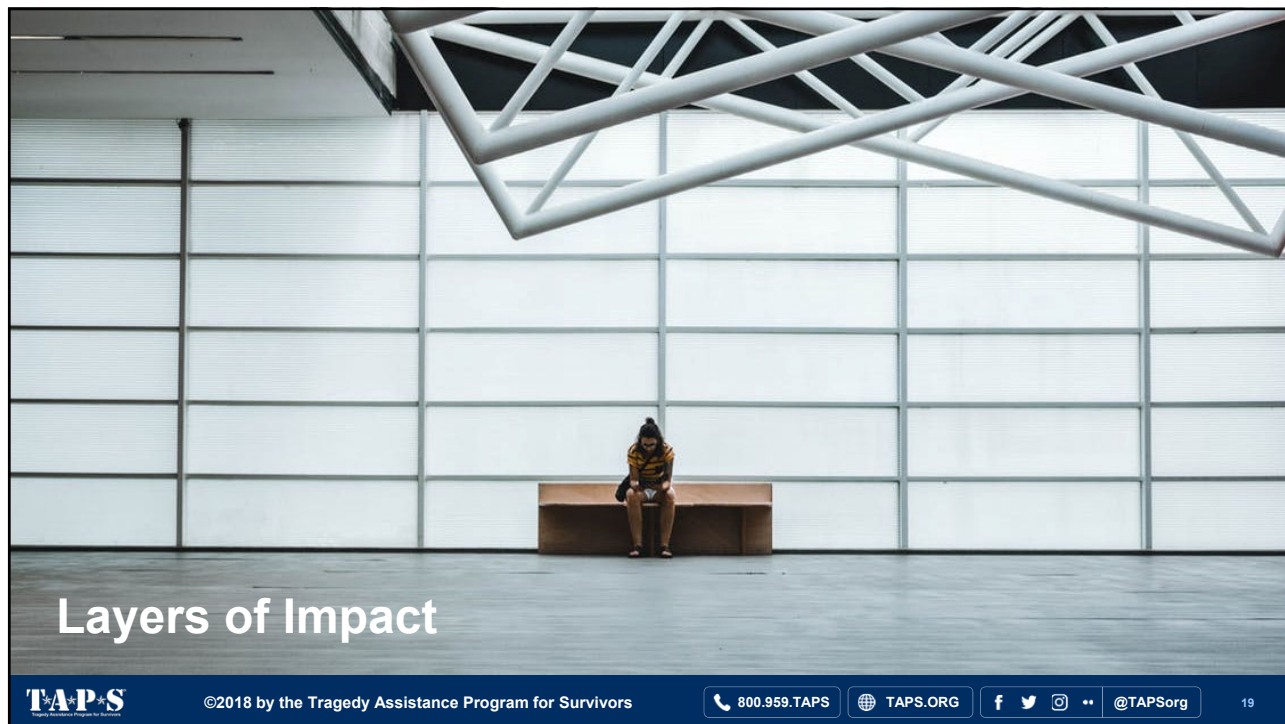
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Learning Objectives — Isolating Factors — Common Emotions — **Layers of Impact** — How to Help

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This slide is identical to slide 17 but highlights the 'Layers of Impact' button in the navigation bar. The 'Layers of Impact' button is significantly larger and more prominent than the others, indicating the current slide's focus.

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Layers of Impact

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Future Challenges

The exercise...



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Learning Objectives — Isolating Factors — Common Emotions — Layers of Impact — How to Help

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This slide features the TAPS logo and the full navigation menu. The background is a photograph of a group of people in red shirts standing in front of a large stone monument. The navigation menu consists of five white circles with blue text, connected by a horizontal line. The footer includes the TAPS logo, copyright information, contact details, and social media icons.

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Isolating Factors — Common Emotions — Layers of Impact — **How to Help**

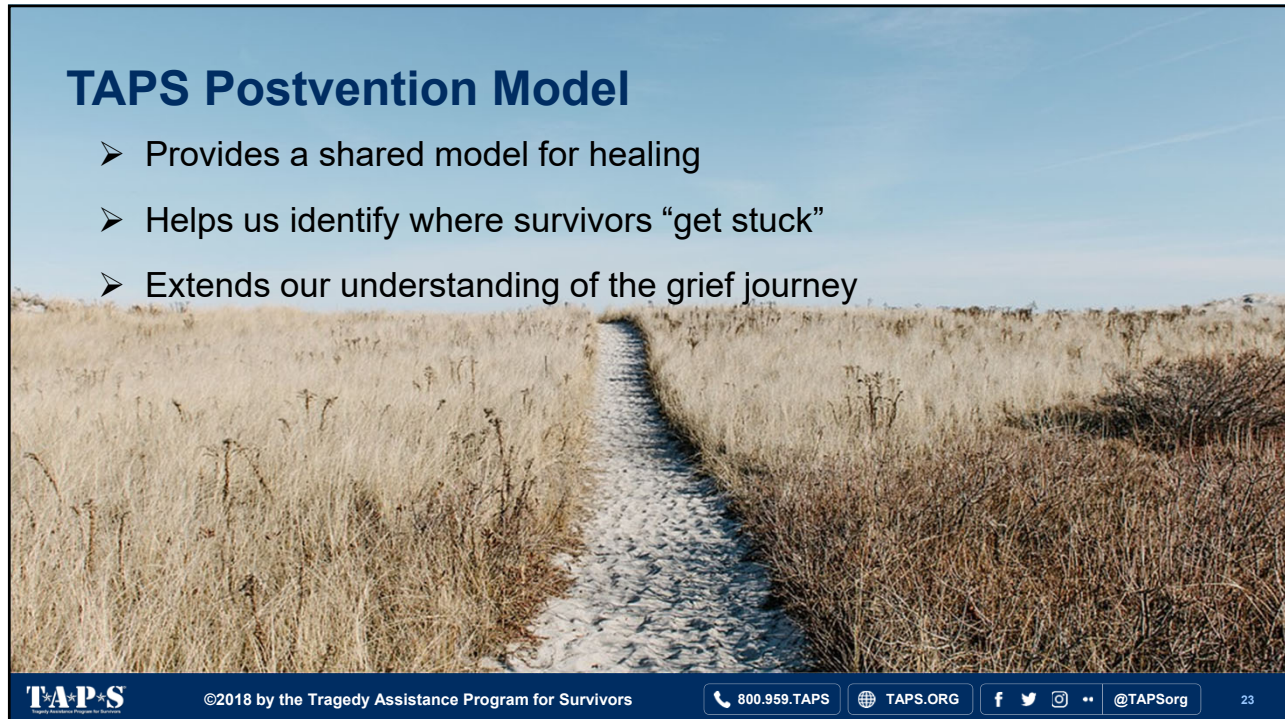
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This slide features the TAPS logo and a navigation menu where the 'How to Help' circle is significantly larger and bolder than the others. The background is the same photograph of people at a monument. The footer is identical to slide 21.

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TAPS Postvention Model

- Provides a shared model for healing
- Helps us identify where survivors “get stuck”
- Extends our understanding of the grief journey



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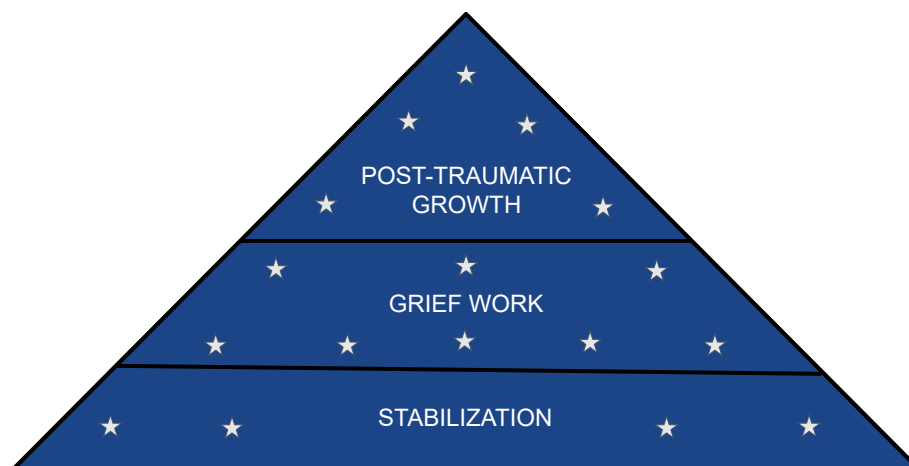
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TAPS 3-phase Postvention Model



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Eight Ways to Help

- 1) Move in close and listen well
- 2) Normalize the full range of emotions
- 3) Connect survivors with others who can help
- 4) Assess risk and trauma
- 5) Help survivors understand why people die by suicide
- 6) Help survivors approach and feel grief
- 7) Help them reconnect (if desired)
- 8) Help them rebuild confidence in their inner voice



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1. Move in Close and Listen Well



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2. Normalize a Range of Emotions



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3. Connect Them with People Who Can Help



*Remember the love,
Celebrate the life,
Share the journey*


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4. Trauma Often Prevents Healthy Grieving

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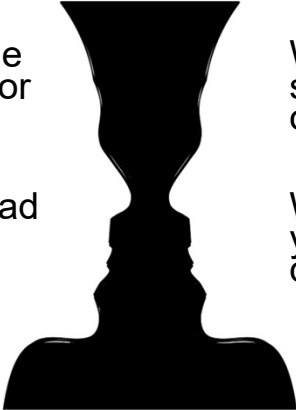
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Examples of Questions to Ask*

* If trauma is indicated, refer for treatment or, if appropriate to your role, consider following up with formal symptom assessments like the PCL-5 and CAPS-5

When was the last time you saw your spouse or partner?

When you lay your head down in bed, what thoughts run through your head?



When you think of your spouse or partner, what kinds of images come to mind?

What story are you telling yourself about his or her death?

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5. Help Them Understand Why People Die by Suicide



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6. Help Survivors with Their Grief

Approaching grief

Holding on to the connection (if desired)



Leaning in to grief bursts

Learning to move through grief



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7. Help Survivors Reconnect (if desired)

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8. Help Survivors Rebuild Their Inner Voice

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Take-Aways

- 1) Spouses and partners who lose their loved one to suicide often have complicated emotions and unique challenges

- 2) There are many ways that we can help spouse and partner survivors in very practical ways (as summarized on the handout that pairs with this training)



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Additional TAPS Resources

- TAPS National Military Survivor Helpline— Phone number: 1-800-959-8277
- Survivor Care Team— <https://www.taps.org/survivorcareteam>
- Grief Counseling— <https://www.taps.org/griefcounseling>
- Casework— <https://www.taps.org/casework>
- Education Assistance— <https://www.taps.org/edu>
- Suicide Loss— <https://www.taps.org/suicide>
- TAPS Magazine— <https://www.taps.org/magazine>
- TAPS Publications— <https://www.taps.org/publications>
- Grief and Loss Education— <https://www.taps.org/institute>
- For Grief Professionals— <https://www.taps.org/professionals>
- Additional Resources— <https://www.taps.org/additionalresources>



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Additional Supportive Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255)
- Give an Hour (giveanhour.org)
- VA Coaching into Care line (www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/)
- Vets4Warriors [peer support for active duty and veterans of military service] (www.vets4warriors.com)
- DoD/Be there (www.militaryonesource.mil/be-there)
- Headstrong (getheadstrong.org)
- Alliance of Hope [online support program for suicide loss survivors] (allianceofhope.org)
- Connections [peer support for attempt survivors and those with suicidal thoughts] (save.org/peersupport)
- American Association for Suicidology (suicidology.org)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (afsp.org)
- The Lighthouse Project/Columbia Scale (<http://cssrs.columbia.edu/>)
- QPR Institute (<https://qprinstitute.com/>)
- ASIST (<https://www.livingworks.net/>)



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Questions and Discussion



Shauna Springer, PhD
Senior Director, Suicide Prevention and Postvention Initiatives
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors



Moderator: Kim Ruocco, MSW
Vice President, Suicide Prevention and Postvention
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About the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing®

Launched in March 2018 through an alliance with HFA, the TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing® serves as a resource and training center, providing programs for both professionals working in the field of grief and loss and the public.



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Upcoming TAPS Institute Programs

- August 13 — *Building Your Circle of Support After a Loss*
 - Presenter: **Denise Rollins**, PhD, Executive Director, Whole Heart Grief & Life Resource Center
- August 27 — *Grieving as They Grow*
 - Presenter: **Vicky Jay**, CEO, National Alliance for Grieving Children
- September 10 — *The 411 on Professional Grief and Trauma Counseling*
 - Presenter: **Jon Reid**, PhD, LPC, FT, TAPS Advisory Board Member

Visit taps.org/institute to learn more and RSVP!



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Continuing Education

If you would like to receive CEs for this program, please go to
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CE Code: **SSFH**



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