**Suicide Loss: Why the Deaths of Celebrities Affects Us so Deeply**

Many people were deeply saddened by the suicide deaths of Kate Spade, Anthony Bourdain and Chester Bennington. Survivors of suicide loss are usually understood to be family and friends of the person who died. But many of us feel very close to the stars we admire, even if we never met them. We listened to their music, bought their products. We’ve immersed ourselves in their books, albums, films; they spoke to us as if they knew who we are. And when they die, we’re inundated with news about them. So it’s not surprising that we may feel the same emotions that are often experienced after suicide deaths: shock, blame, grief. We are left with unresolved feelings: it may feel profoundly unfair to lose them so young; we may be angry that they took their own lives. And if we’ve lost other people close to us, these new deaths can re-awaken those former griefs as well.

**What can you do?**

Former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy says, “I think of emotional well-being as a resource within each of us that allows us to do more and to perform better. That doesn’t mean just the absence of mental illness. It’s the presence of positive emotions that allows us to be resilient in the face of adversity.” He suggests we ask ourselves: where do we turn for comfort? To food, alcohol, drugs, bad habits? Or to the company of friends, walks in nature, art, music, exercise?

* + There is no “right way” to mourn; just because you are grieving someone you never met doesn’t make your loss any less real.
  + Take comfort in what the person you admired has left behind: their music, writing, recipes, art. It’s okay if you need to avoid these memories for a time.
  + Perhaps hold a ceremony or gathering with others who share your feelings. Watch your favorite videos or listen to your favorite songs together and treasure the memories. It can help to feel you’re part of a community.
  + Take your time but stay connected with others.
  + Don’t wait for your friends and family to share their distress. Reach out to them; ask how they’re doing. Acknowledge the loss that they feel and take time to listen to their views. All of us can offer love and compassion and provide comfort to others.

To learn the warning signs of suicide and how to support someone you are concerned about visit www.suicideispreventable.org