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### Suicide Bereavement Services Best Practice

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Survivors of  
Bereavement  
*by Suicide*

John Whitebrook, Ph.D.  
SoBS Trustee – Research Lead  
Suicide bereavement researcher



*Alex Whitebrook*

*03-Feb-1991 ~ 01-May-2017*

# Suicide Bereavement Services Best Practice

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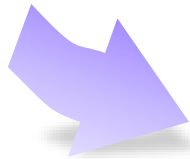
- *Delivering on service expectations*
- *Core standards for suicide bereavement support*
- *Why core standards are important*

# Delivering on service expectations

- *Understanding & communication of core mission!*

## *SoBS Mission:*

*Offer timely and ongoing peer support, to adults bereaved or impacted by suicide loss, providing hope, healing and a voice to those left behind*









- *Clarity to those who use services & partners*

# Delivering on service expectations

- *Create a reliable, dependable service for users to lean on when needed*
- *Over promising to grieving individuals seeking suicide bereavement support and under delivering may lead them to stop reaching out*
- *Understand limitations – refer as appropriate*

# Delivering on service expectations

What  
we  
do:

- *84 groups – most f-2-f, a few virtual* ( <sup>Some</sup> <sub>Specialist</sub> ) 
- *National Support line* 
- *Email Support & Online Forum* 
- *Creating and delivering training* 
- *Talking to people with shared experiences* 
- *Working with third parties* 

# Core standards for suicide bereavement support



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Suicide loss  
survivor centric

# Core standards for suicide bereavement support

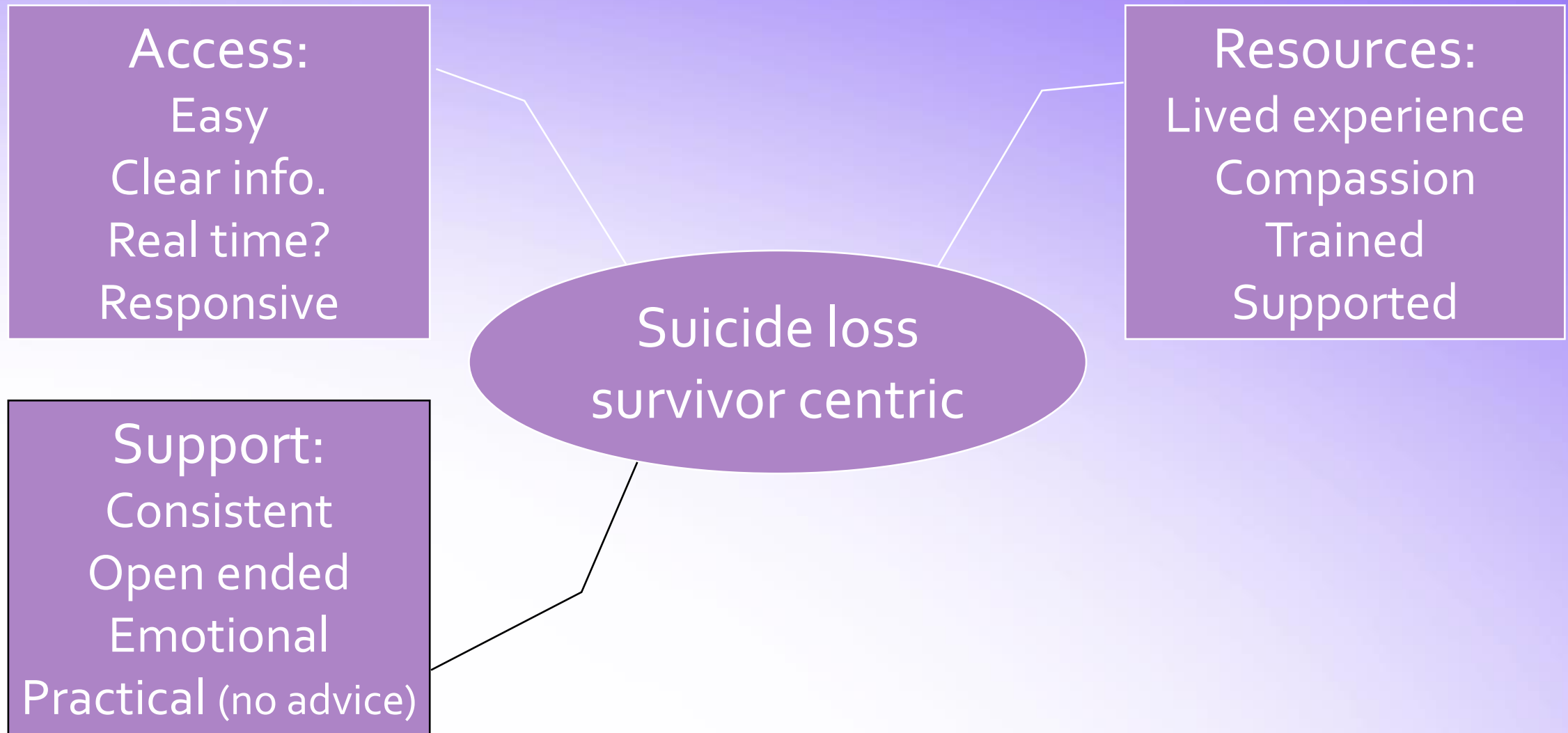
Access:  
Easy  
Clear info.  
Real time?  
Responsive

Suicide loss  
survivor centric

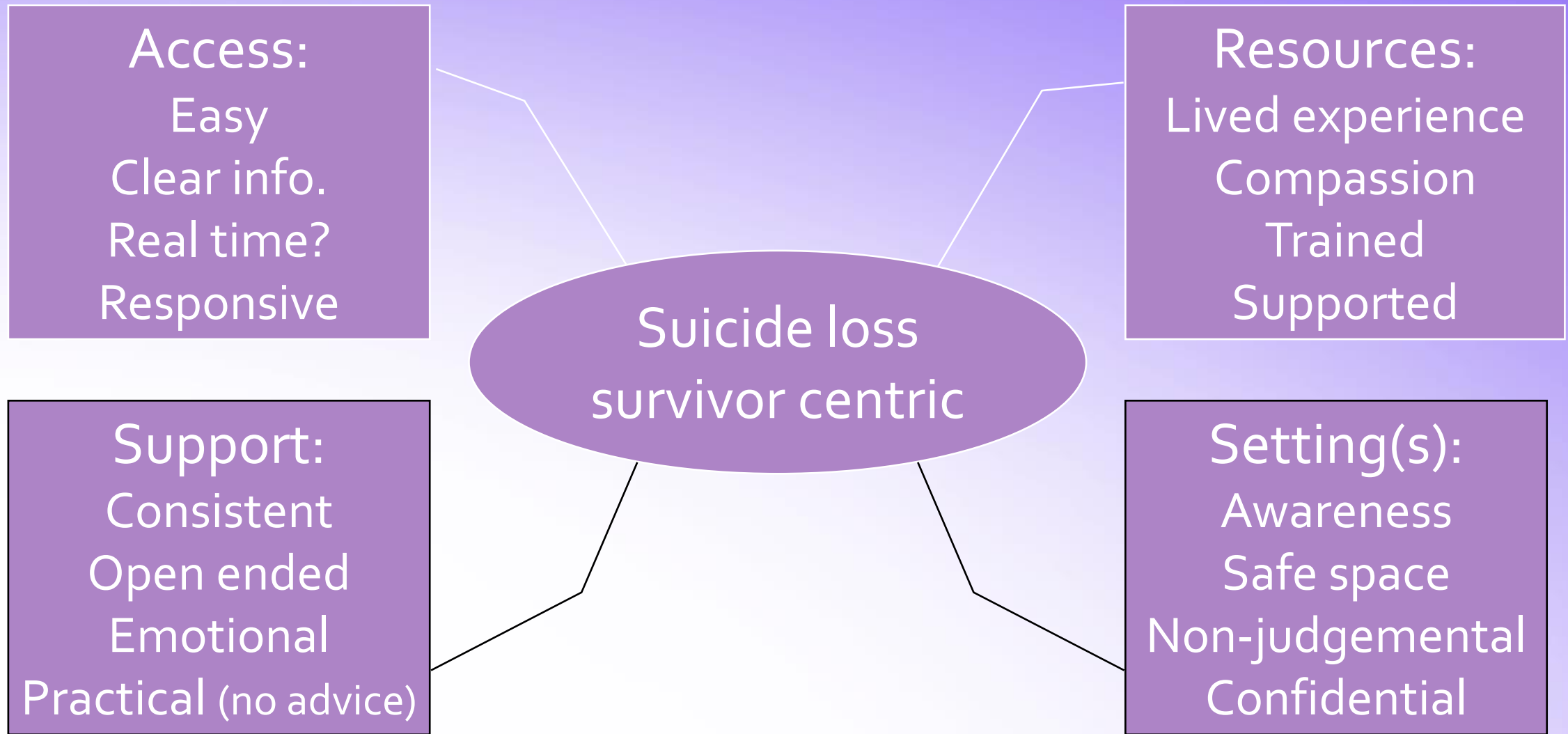
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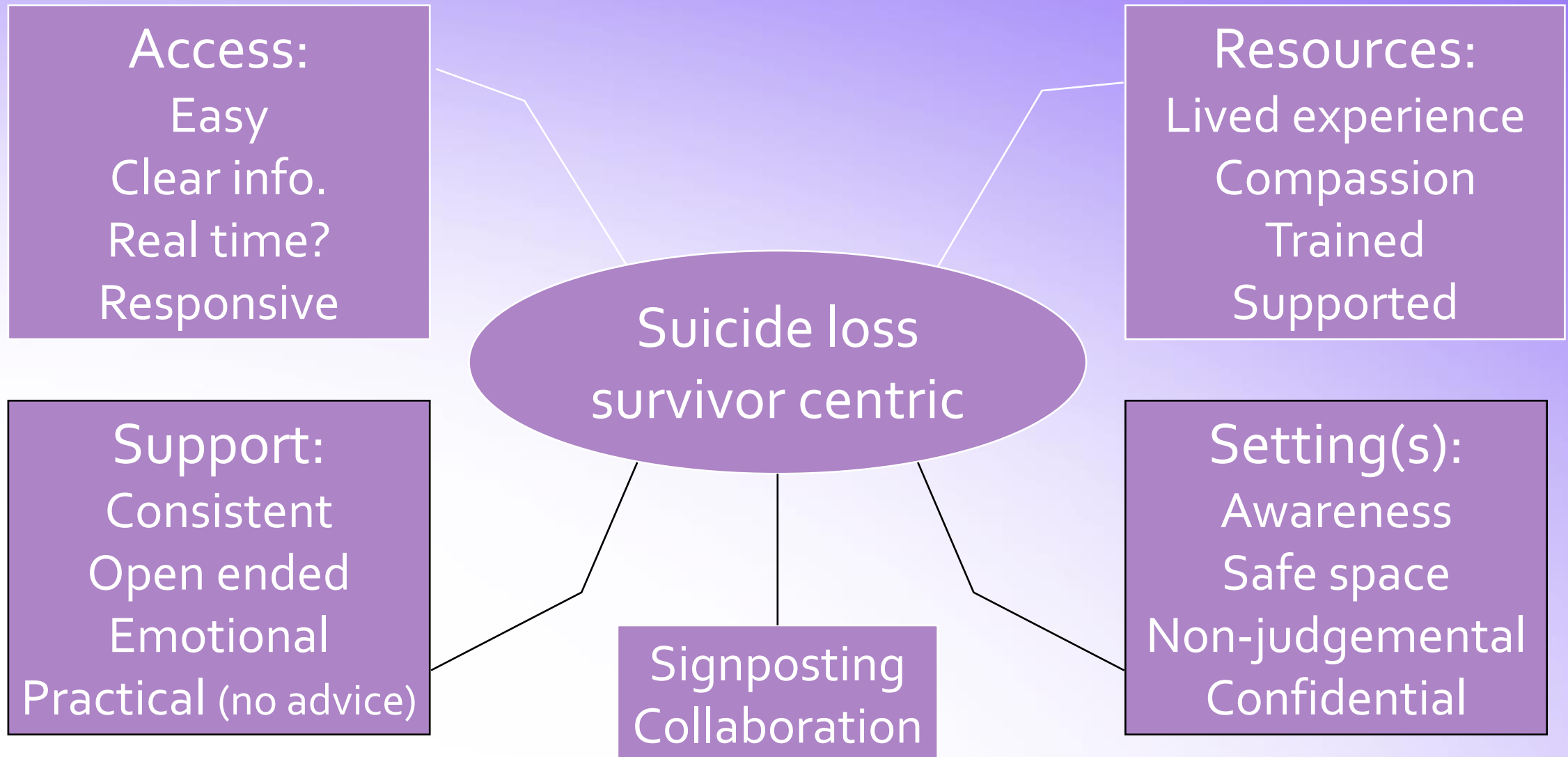
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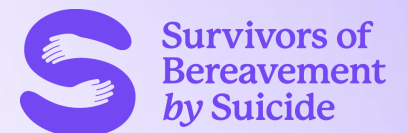


# Pro-actively signpost & collaborate

- *There are lots of exceptional charities offering specialist support*
  - *Be aware of who else can help*
  - *Support academic research*
  - *Help develop standards*




**+ Local  
authorities &  
charities**








# Example collaboration

## BREAKING THE STIGMA

MYTH	FACT
There's a set time on grieving a loved one lost to suicide.	 <p>Our bereavement journeys are uniquely personal to each individual. There is no set timeline, and each journey should be respected.</p>

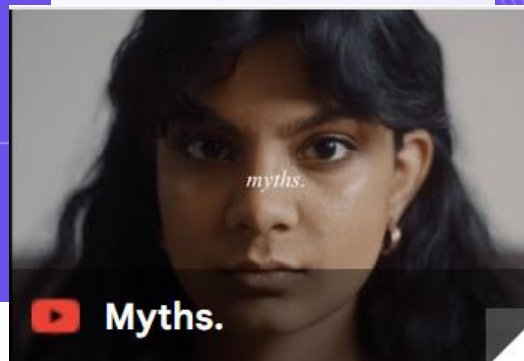
  Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide 

*10 Posters  
5 films  
Prevention  
&  
Postvention*

## BREAKING THE STIGMA

MYTH	FACT
People bereaved by suicide don't want to talk about their loved one.	 <p>Most bereaved people still want to share their memories of the loved one they have lost, and celebrate their lives.</p>

  Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide 



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlevncA8U4c>

# Why core standards are important

- *Clear and consistent expectations & matching – known limits*
  - *Volunteer skills and approaches consistent*
- *Volunteer flexibility / mutual support / resilience / motivation*
  - *Common empathy and understanding*
  - *Approaches planned but also adaptable to needs*
- *Facilitate creation of a de-stigmatised safe space for the bereaved to discuss their complex emotions*
- *Promote reflection, evaluation, sustainability & feedback*

# Feedback

“I go to a SoBS meeting twice a month and it is mine and my sister’s **lifeline** since we lost my sister’s son.”

- Female, 45-54 years old, Yorkshire England

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“When I contacted SoBS it was the day after and I just felt so desperate **I needed to know someone was on the end of a phone who had experienced loss in a similar way** that I could talk to.”

- Female, 35-44 years old, North West England



# Feedback

“I go to a SoBS meeting twice a month and it is mine and my sister’s **lifeline** since we lost my sister’s son.”

- Female, 45-54 years old, Yorkshire England

“When I contacted SoBS it was the day after and I just felt so desperate **I needed to know someone was on the end of a phone who had experienced loss in a similar way** that I could talk to.”

years old, North West England

“I have experienced the support SoBS can give, and **it was very empathetic and understanding of the wide variety of feelings my family was feeling through our grieving process.** We had the same 2 people that we could chat too and that were guides to express our emotions.”

- Female, 45-54 year old, South East England

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“When you have lost someone by **suicide, it is not something that is in the past and is gone and is over; it is very much a living experience**”

- SoBS Volunteer

# THANK YOU



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