



BEYOND SEPTEMBER™ · FREE PLANNING SHEET

The Next Gathering

A small holiday plan after a suicide loss

A companion to "When Someone Is Missing — the Holidays After a Suicide Loss."

Before you begin

Planning a whole season can feel like too much. This sheet focuses on just the next gathering: whether to go, how long to stay, who to tell and how to leave. Use what fits, leave the rest blank and change your mind whenever you need to. Beyond September provides awareness and education, not therapy, medical care, crisis services or peer support.

01

Choose the one gathering

Pick only the next event in front of you. You can plan for the others later, or not at all.

02

Decide on an invitation answer

“Yes,” “For a little while,” “Not this year” and “Can I let you know on the day?” are all complete answers. You do not owe anyone an explanation.

03

Set one or two boundaries

You might decide on topics you will not discuss, how long you will stay or whether you will help host. Telling one person ahead of time can make it easier to keep them.

04

Plan a way to leave

Arrange your own ride, agree on a simple signal with someone you trust and choose a sentence for leaving, such as “I’m heading out early tonight.” Leaving early is not letting anyone down.

05

Decide whether to remember them there

You might set out their photo, share a favorite story, make a dish they loved or keep their memory private that day. Ask others what they would like rather than assuming.

06

Plan the hours afterward

Choose something gentle for later that evening or the next morning, and someone you could text. If you are struggling to cope, consider qualified professional support.

My plan for the next gathering

This is a holiday planning sheet, not a clinical safety plan.

The gathering: when, where and who will be there

My answer to the invitation

One or two boundaries I want to keep

My way to leave (ride, signal, what I will say)

Whether and how I might remember them there

Something gentle for afterward, and someone I could text

Need support right now? (United States)

Call or text 988: Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. For immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. Outside the United States, contact your local emergency service or crisis line.