

Sharing Your Story: Writing It Down

Writing down your story can help you think carefully about what you want to say and how you want to say it. Some people find it easier to memorize the words they've chosen, and others find that flubs them up. Do what you are comfortable. This is a suggested, possible outline.



- **Section 1– My relationship with my loved one**
describe positive qualities of my loved one, things we liked to do together, How we met/how long in relationship (for spouses), number of children, give a sense of family life. 1-2 paragraphs
- **Section 2 - My loved one – the bare basics**
Name, age, rank, hometown, when he/she joined the military, why he/she joined the military, what his/her jobs were in the military. 1-2 paragraphs
- **Section 3 – Something was wrong**
Symptoms my loved one exhibited that pointed to suicide that I may or may not have noticed at the time. 1-5 paragraphs
- **Section 4 – When my loved one died**
Do not go into details about the method used unless asked – just say – “He died by suicide on XYZ date. 1 paragraph
- **Section 5 – My journey since**
How my loved one’s death has impacted me and my family. What you have learned personally. 1-3 paragraphs
- **Section 6 – What I want others to know (signs) and I want to encourage others in trouble to get help**
I want for others to know the warning signs of suicide. Mention again briefly some of the symptoms you described that your loved one exhibited. Encourage others to get help now. Mention 1-3 paragraphs
- **Section 7 – Applying What I’ve Learned, Beyond Me to Advocate for Change, Improve Military/System/Society**
Where could the system/society/the military improve to prevent the suicide of your loved one? What changes/improvements could be made that might help someone else? 1-3 paragraphs