

## **The Suicide Funeral (or Memorial Service): Honoring Their Memory, Comforting Their Survivors**

Edited by Melinda Moore and Daniel Roberts

Reviewed by William Feigelman, Ph.D.

The Suicide Funeral (or Memorial Service) edited by Melinda Moore and Daniel Roberts, Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2017 is a unique book offering suicide survivors and their spiritual advisors compassionate guidance, helpful information and substantial support on how to plan their loved one's memorial service so that a solid foundation can be set for advancing a bereaved's healing. Moore, a psychologist and Assistant Professor of Psychology at Eastern Kentucky University, and Roberts, a retired Rabbi from Cleveland, Ohio present their own writings and that of 31 other contributors, to better guide the bereaved and their spiritual counselors through the thicket of planning a funeral when a loved one dies by suicide. Many of the contributors are well known authors in the bereavement field, including such luminaries as Norman Vincent Peale, William Bausch, Kenneth Doka, Earl Grollman, Charles Rubey, Robert Morneau, Harold Ivan Smith, among others. The editors, both suicide survivors themselves, have carefully chosen selections that cover all major belief systems: Catholicism, various Christian denominations, Judaism, Buddhism, the Muslim faith, having a non-faith based service and many of the contributors are also suicide survivors besides holding positions of leadership in their diverging faith and social service communities.

In their introductory essays the editors meaningfully and articulately set the stage for the diverging pieces of helpful advice, poetic selections and thoughtful ruminations that form the body of this most useful work. Moore's commanding grasp of the suicidology literature offers a succinct summary of the extensiveness of suicide exposures and bereavements in society, touching the lives of so many more than commonly thought, inducing shock, bewilderment, shame, stigma and self-stigmatization. Rabbi Roberts follows with a meaningful essay on the quintessential importance of engaging with the bereaved non-judgmentally, listening empathically to their thoughts and concerns, and then developing eulogies that positively frame the life of the deceased and offering followup care to the suicide bereaved family. From these beginning points the editors have painstakingly chosen a wide array of essays that thoughtfully and compassionately provide guidance to spiritual advisors entrusted with the task of organizing a funeral service for a suicide decedent. The hugely valuable information and advice offered in this volume should make this book essential reading and an indispensable resource for any clergyperson offering help in planning funeral services. Some of the helpful advice offered here could also apply to other cases of traumatic deaths such as drug overdoses. Funeral directors, too, should be acquainted with this valuable work as they guide mourners and their spiritual advisors toward healing after traumatic deaths. Fortunately, the publisher has attractively priced this volume, enabling it to have a wide distribution, which this book justly deserves.