My son/daughter beyond the suicidal: search for meaning of life

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Abstract: This study is part of a larger investigation about the experience of parents who have lost an adult son or daughter to suicide. It aims to understand the search for meaning in life after the death of their son/daughter. A qualitative research was carried out in which seven participants were interviewed (mothers and fathers). The results were analyzed according to the content analysis method thematic-category. We discussed the categories: my son/daughter beyond the suicidal and search for meaning and transformations after the death. The desire to speak freely about their son or daughter was evidenced; to desire to continue or create projects related to the history of life and/or death, the aim to recognize and assume the transformations resulting from this loss and build new meanings of life without the presence of this child. We concluded that maintaining the bond with the child was fundamental in the grieving process.

Key-words: Grief; parents; suicide.

Meu/minha filho(a) para além do suicida: busca por sentido na vida

Resumo: Este estudo faz parte de uma investigação mais ampla sobre a experiência de pais que perderam filhos adultos por suicídio. Objetivou-se compreender a busca por sentido na vida após a morte do(a) filho(a). Realizou-se uma pesquisa qualitativa na qual foram entrevistados sete participantes (mães e pais). Os resultados foram analisados de acordo com o método de análise de conteúdo, vertente temático-categorial. Discutiram-se as categorias: (1) meu/minha filho(a) para além do suicida e (2) busca por sentido e transformações a partir da morte do(a) filho(a). Percebeu-se o desejo por falar livremente do(a) filho(a), continuar ou criar projetos relacionados à história de vida e/ou da morte, reconhecer e assumir as transformações decorrentes dessa perda e construir novos sentidos de vida sem a presença desse(a) filho(a). Conclui-se que a manutenção do vínculo com o(a) filho(a) foi fundamental no processo de luto.

Palavras-chave: Luto; pais; suicídio.

Introduction

Suicide is a tragedy that has far-reaching effects on families, communities, and entire countries. According to WHO (2020), the suicide rate is 10.6 per 100,000 inhabitants, resulting in approximately 804,000 deaths by suicide annually. Each death by suicide affects an average

of six people in many ways: affectively, emotionally, socially, and economically, leading to five million people being affected each year. In addition, suicide occurs at distinct stages of the life cycle, and it is the fourth leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29 worldwide. Suicide grieve is widespread in society, therefore it is necessary to consider and develop strategies for supporting those people affected by it.

Based on this data, one might wonder about the pain a parent experiences when losing a child in this way, since the death of a child is widely regarded as the most devastating tragedy in people's lives (Luz, Sanchez, Barral & Sousa, 2017; Stroebe & Schut, 2001; Parkes, 2009; Franqueira, Magalhães & Féres-Carneiro, 2015; Duncan & Byard, 2018). Death by suicide carries a societal taboo as it is believed that every effort should be made to prevent death. This taboo stems from viewing death as unnatural and something to be avoided. Dying is seen as a human failure, and this perception is even more pronounced when it involves the death of a child who should be under the 'protection' of their parents (Silva, 2009). Thus, the loss of a child to suicide encompasses two relevant points: the stigma surrounding suicide and the loss of a child.

The death of a child has a profound impact on the family, causing immense stress, anxiety, and sadness for the parents (Koukourikos, Kourkouta, Iliadis & Tsaloglidou, 2019). When the death is a suicide, the parents' reaction can be even more difficult, due to the stigma associated with self-destruction. The suicide of a child by is a severe trauma that increases the parents' risk of psychological morbidity and physical health issues compared to other causes of death (Ross, Kõlves, Kunde & De Leo, 2018).

Often, in such circumstances, family members often describe isolating themselves from social interactions and that they have heard negative or harmful comments after the death of their children, even from close people such as ex-partners, parents, in-laws, and siblings (Feigelman & Cerel, 2020). So, as Fukumitsu and Kovács (2016) point out, in addition to grief, the bereaved must deal with stigma that encompasses guilt, pity and judgment.

Studies indicate a correlation between certain characteristics (such as gender, age, family, social issues, and the presence of psychological disorders, for example) and the act of suicide (Birtchnell, 1981; Kirsling, 1986; Canetto, 1992; Harmer, Lee, Duong & Saadabadi, 2021). In the search for explanations, people who have committed suicide are often labeled or perceived as "depressed", "troubled", or "weak". Society's perception of parents who have lost a child also contributes to stigmas (Lerner & Faria, 2019).

These stigmas surrounding suicide have a significant impact on the grieving process, making it even more challenging. Individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide often face

increased isolation, a lack of social support, and feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and shame. This can lead to inhibition, prolonged grief, or distorted mourning (Casellato, 2020). Feijoo (2021), when analyzing speeches on the suicide bereavement subject, highlighted the profound grief expressed by parents who have lost their children to suicide. These parents openly expressed their desire to follow in their child's footsteps and described the fact that life has lost its meaning. They experience intense feelings of guilt, resentment, loneliness, and a sense of personal failure.

The grieving process of a suicide survivor is complicated by several factors, including social stigma, feelings of guilt and shame, the struggle to symbolize their loss due to a lack of recognition and validation of their grief, and other emotional, economic, or legal difficulties. All of these issues point to a lack of social support for those bereaved by suicide and can lead to intense suffering and complications in grieving (Scavacini, Cornejo & Cescon, 2019).

According to Riches and Dawson (1996), bereaved parents tend to be avoided, and there is the impression that the death has somehow contaminated them. Parents who have lost a child are stigmatized, pitied, embarrassed, avoided and censured by others. They face isolation and struggle in their social context to find support in discussing their loss due to the discomfort it brings to people.

In the process of parental bereavement, a mother or father who has recently lost a child finds themselves in an unfamiliar realm (Brice, 1991). In this new reality, they feel like outsiders to those who have not gone through a similar loss, leading to feelings of isolation and a lack of understanding. They may also experience envy towards parents who still have their children. Advice from individuals without personal experience is often met with little reception (Brice, 1991; Freitas, 2015).

Resentment often arises from the social expectation to forget about deceased children, the need for permission to express emotions, to talk about changes that are taking place and to mention the person who has died. Talking about how they feel is not something that fixes them to the loss; on the contrary, discussing feelings can be comforting, promotes understanding, and demonstrates a caring and organized approach (Tavares, 2018).

When discussing the bereavement process, Parkes (1998) When discussing the bereavement process, Parkes (1998) emphasizes that individuals go through a psychosocial transition where they adopt a new identity, adjust to a world without their loved one, take on new roles, and develop new coping mechanisms to deal with life's problems. Thus, the bereaved person not only loses a loved one, but also a part of themselves, and needs to develop and to adapt to this new reality and to the individual they have become. Losing a loved one, especially

a child, is a distinctive experience that requires parents to navigate numerous adjustments on personal, marital, and social levels.

According to Caselatto (2002), the loss of a child impacts various dimensions of parents' lives, including the past, present, and future, as well as their individual identity, relationship with their partner, family dynamics, and social context. ,Following the death of their child, parents undergo a significant identity shift and must learn how to navigate parenthood in the absence of their child. While they may continue with daily activities, plans, and maintain their family and marital relationships, the absence of the child leads to a transformation in the parents' identity (Coelho Filho & Lima, 2017).

According to Robert Neimeyer's (2001) constructivist perspective, the central process for the bereaved is the reconstruction of meaning after loss. The grieving process entails re-learning how to navigate the world and engage with it without the presence of the deceased (Attig, 2001; Neimeyer, 2001). Neimeyer (2001) highlights two processes: meaning making and meaning finding.

The first process involves identifying the meanings attributed to actions, experiences, and suffering. It also permits the renewal of hope and the aspects reinterpretation of one's self-narrative and self-understanding. The process of finding meaning requires grappling with previously experienced meanings within the context of life before the loss (Luna & Moré, 2019). This meaning reconstruction is conducted through the use of narratives or life stories. Questions such as "Why me? What do I do now? Who am I now?" arise in the minds of the bereaved and the search for answers is the first step in this process of meaning construction (Franco, 2021).

In this way, it is understood that a person's ability to "recover" from bereavement does not come from their ability to forget the lost person, but to construct and remodel their presumed world, so that it includes and redesigns the treasure of the past (Parkes, 2009). The presumed world is understood as the vision of the internal world that was considered true before the loss. In any case, a transformation in the relationship is necessary, considering the reality in which the deceased is not present.

This continuation can happen, for example, by maintaining the values and objectives built up with the deceased (Bowlby, 1973/2006). In other words, by maintaining a bond with the deceased - as long as they are aware that the death has taken place - the bereaved undergo a psychosocial transition that enables them to gradually incorporate the changes stemming from the loss into their lives. Thus, the process of mourning is not a mechanism of detachment, but of integrating death into the journey of life (Field, 2008).

Sharing their story and the story of their child can be a valuable tool in the grieving process, helping to find meaning in the loss. The narrative chosen by the bereaved to tell their story of loss and the meanings attributed to it are vitally important for the development of a healthy healing. Meaning-making involves understanding the loss and integrating it into one's personal worldview, such as comprehending the cause of death (Bogensperger & Lueger-Schuster, 2014).

Furthermore, individuals who have experienced loss can find meaning and strength in their journey, indicating resilience and personal growth (Frankl, 2009; Davis, 2001; Neimeyer, Baldwin & Gilles, 2006; Franqueira, Magalhães & Féres-Carneiro, 2015). Finding meaning and purpose in living through the situation can aid family members cope with the death of their children (Lari, Shimo, Carmona, Moraes Lopes & Campos, 2018; Ross, Kõlves, Kunde & De Leo, 2018; Neimeyer, Baldwin & Gilles, 2006). In this sense, the mourning process occurs in two directions simultaneously: maintaining previously consolidated meanings and articulating new meanings and identity possibilities.

According to Stroebe and Schut (2001),), maintaining connections and incorporating the deceased into life after the loss is beneficial for the grieving process. This involves transforming the relationship with the deceased, so that the bereaved adapts to the current reality, maintaining a connection with the loved one, but gradually repositioning this relationship so that it makes sense with the current moment (Klass, Silvermann & Nickmann, 1996).

Hence, there is a dual process of maintaining continuity and undergoing transformation in the survivor's connection with the child who died. This integration can happen in several ways, including changes in relationships, engagement in rituals, participation in support groups, undertaking projects related to the loss, and sharing the child's story. Therefore, this study aims to explore the quest for meaning in life following the loss of a child to suicide, drawing from a comprehensive examination of parental bereavement experience.

Methods

A qualitative study was carried out using field research.

Participants

The study involved seven independent participants (Table 1): four mothers and three fathers who experienced the loss of an adult child to suicide within a span of two to 12 years.

The participants' ages ranged from 60 to 66, while the ages of their deceased children ranged from 18 to 37. Two participants had only one child, while five had multiple children. In terms of education, six out of the seven participants had higher education, and one completed high school. The interviewees were from various states in Brazil.

In order to participate in the survey, certain inclusion criteria were established: the timing of the death, the occurrence of death prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the age of the child. These criteria were chosen because the first year after a child's death is a particularly challenging period in the grieving process, as it involves experiencing significant events without the presence of the deceased, such as birthdays, family rituals, religious dates, and the anniversary of the death. The requirement for the death to have occurred before the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 takes into consideration the unique circumstances and challenges associated with losses during that time. Lastly, participants needed to be of legal age, which is at least 18 years old at the time of their child's death.

Table 1

Participant Identification Data

Participant	Age	Deceased Child	Age that child died	Other children	Grieving time
Helena	66 years old	Davi	37 years old	1	10 years
Fernanda	61 years old	João	29 years old	1	12 years
Marília	63 years old	Pamela	28 years old	0	03 years
Raquel	66 years old	Catharina	23 years old	1	09 years
Luiz	63 years old	Sofia	18 years old	2	08 years
Marcelo	60 years old	Vanessa	26 years old	0	03 years
Daniel	63 years old	Breno	24 years old	1	02 years

Sourcer: the author

Research instrument

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, based on a script with a trigger question about their experience of loss and topics related to the research objectives - such as characteristics of the grieving process, rituals, and support resources. the interviews were conducted in a manner that allowed for new topics to emerge naturally in the participants' conversations.

Procedures

The participants were selected through contact with associations that offer support to family members bereaved by suicide or through referrals from other health professionals. The interviews were conducted individually, online using the Zoom platform, at the convenience of the participants, and lasted an average of 90 minutes. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed in full by the researcher to ensure the preservation of all interviewees' speech.

The interviews were conducted from June to August 2021. The research project that led to this study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the university where it was conducted (22/2021). The participants signed an Informed Consent Form authorizing the disclosure of results. To protect their identities, participants have been assigned fictitious names.

The interview material was transcribed and analyzed using the thematic categorical content analysis method (Bardin, 2016). It involves systematically and objectively describing the interviews and defining coding units. From the broader research on parents who have lost children to suicide, and to achieve the objective of this study, two categories of analysis emerged: (1) My child beyond the suicide and (2) Search for meaning and transformations after the death of the child.

Discussion of the results

My child beyond suicide

The taboo surrounding suicide extends not only to the individual who died by suicide but also to their family. Following a suicide there is often a fixed perception of the individual as being solely defined by their suicidal act. However, the parents portrayed their children by emphasizing their unique qualities and strengths. Each participant spoke fondly of their child, highlighting their positive attributes and how they influenced personal growth and contributed to making the world a better place.

> Sofia was the most intelligent person I knew. She had an unmatched reading speed and devoured books in a way that amazed me. Even her teachers at school acknowledged her intelligence and called us to share their observations. However, she remained humble despite her abilities. (Luiz)

According to Koukourikos, Kourkouta, Iliadis, and Tsaloglidou (2019), family members of individuals who died by suicide not only experience complicated grief but also

face moral stigma associated with this type of death. In the case of suicide, the stigma extends beyond the individual who died to their family members. Parents even mention observing the discomfort of others when talking about their child (Wainwright et al., 2020).

The participants' accounts reflect a desire to challenge the negative stereotypes associated with their child. There is the aim to emphasize their child's qualities and accomplishments, and to acknowledge them beyond their death. The child is portrayed not only as someone who died by suicide but also an individual who made a positive impact, overcame challenges, achieved academic and professional success, and fostered loving and caring relationships.

> There, on the day I took him to get help, there was a man who came outside curious to see what was going on... He started talking and told me that his son worked at Boteco A, and he asked where my son worked. I said Boteco A. His son came in and asked: "Auntie, who's your son?" I said "João", he said "ah.... João" and started crying, clinging to his father "It was him, Dad, it was this guy who was a brother, who without knowing me taught me everything, while everyone was just making fun of me, he was by my side, he gave me his hand and made me get the job". You know, there is nothing better. When I look back... (Fernanda)

According to Owens, Lambert, Lloyd, and Donovan (2008), parents of children who die by suicide may experience feelings of guilt, believing they could have done more to ensure their child's happiness and protect them from losing hope. They may feel the need to defend themselves and their child's moral reputation. Family members may also face judgment and shame, in addition to remorse, due to societal prejudice (Fukumitsu & Kovács, 2016). The taboo surrounding suicide can contribute to a culture of silence within the family, preventing a healthy grieving process from taking place (Kreuz & Antoniassi, 2020).

> Sometimes I notice this: I say, "Catharina loved Nutella", and the person freezes, it has a certain impact and the conversation changes. It is as if she could not like Nutella... I always try to remember that Catharina existed, that she is alive inside me, that she has an incredibly beautiful story that I do not want to forget, ever! And as many times as I can speak her name and her story, I will. (Raquel)

> Even then I could have held back more, being something, a whole thing, a university professor, a beautiful, beautiful man! When do I realize that I did not talk about suicide because that would have discredited Davi's entire career, you know? It is as if it is a discredit to Davi, it is as if it could erase all the wonderful people that I, that he could have been, and that I could talk to, that he committed suicide. (Helena)

Parents often feel that discussing their child, including their death and other aspects, makes others uncomfortable. Even talking about everyday situations can be met with unease, as if a person who died by suicide cannot share common qualities with others. According to Lerner and Faria (2019), when a death occurs, particularly when it is considered unexpected, such as the case of a child's suicide, it deeply affects grieving parents. Those around them are reminded of the reality of death and may fear being in an indistinguishable situation.

There is then an ambiguity – in one hand, these families generate repulsion, and in the other, compassion. Society may want to hide their pain, yet also recognizes and validates their need to express themselves publicly. When society acknowledges the shared humanity with those who have experienced suicide, it confronts the reality that death and mourning are possibilities for anyone who is close to or listens to these grieving individuals.

According to Wainwright et al. (2020), lmany parents hesitate to talk about their children because they are concerned about the impact it may have on others. The study conducted by Lerner and Faria (2019) with bereaved mothers revealed that people often avoid or fear discussing the subject and the person who has passed away. This response reflects how society has chosen to cope with the suffering of these mothers, expressing annoyance, pity, impatience, and withdrawal.

After a person dies by suicide, their identity can become solely associated with the act itself. This often leads to a focus on negative attributes or factors that may have contributed to the act, overshadowing their uniqueness. Discussing other aspects of the child's life can be uncomfortable because it challenges the crystallized image of the individual and disrupts the perception that those who die by suicide are fundamentally different, thus highlighting the original nature of existence, the finitude.

The participants emphasized the importance of breaking away from the crystallized image, presenting their children as multifaceted individuals, and even being proud of the children they had raised. Thinking and talking about the loved one are activities that seek out the memories of the deceased when they were alive, a way of aiming to continue the bond, considered a legacy that influences changes in the bereaved (Nickman, 1996; Rangel, 2008).

Searching for meaning and transformation after the death of their child

Losing a child is profoundly distressing and challenges the natural order of life events: the young should outlive the old. When faced with the reality that a child may die before a father or mother, this disruption raises existential questions about the meaning of life (Bogensperger & Lueger-Schuster, 2014). The participants reported that they were looking for a meaning to their child's death, seeking understanding for their pain. They also shared how they had been transformed by the loss and made life changes to cope with the immense suffering, while living in a world in which their child is no longer present.

> Our cord was cut the day he was buried, we finished cutting it when he was buried. Because physically it is cut when you separate the child from the mother, from the womb, from the placenta. And in this case, when you return it to the earth, you have cut off all physical contact. There is no more, there is not. (Fernanda)

The meaning attributed to the loss helps them to deal more effectively with their pain and fears, so the search for meaning is a common factor in the grieving process. In cases of premature, sudden, or violent loss, the destruction of an individual's "assumed world" can be especially severe and prolonged, making it all the more necessary to make sense of the loss and the life that follows (Parkes, 2009). From the reports above, it can be seen the search for closure. Based on the perspective of meaning-making, Neimeyer (2001) advocates a new paradigm for understanding bereavement, suggesting that meaning-making is an active process in the face

of loss. The participants in this research used metaphors and theirs and their children's memories to give meaning to their loss.

> My concept of love changed completely, I did not know what love was [...] I did not go back to who I was, you know. I did not know what patience was, I did not know what it was like to stare at a flower for hours, analyzing it, talking to it, admiring it. I lost the pressure of everything. I lost the rush of life. I became someone else. (Daniel)

> She made me smarter about some subjects I did not know. She made me more empathetic in places I did not even realize I was not empathetic. She made me more resilient to pain. Much more. Stupidly more... And her death has made me a much stronger person. Much more present. I know that I want to live despite my physical pain, my emotional pain, my soul being broken, I have said a few times that sometimes I look like a Picasso painting. The nose is on the forehead, the eye is here. I put it together. I am another version of myself. (Marília)

According to Andriessen, Krysinska, Richwood, and Pirkis (2020), after the loss of a child, parents undergo a profound transformation in every aspect of life. They must discover their new identity, preferences, limits, and tolerances. Bereavement involves the reconstruction of a new identity in the face of changing circumstances. It signifies a shift in relationships and situations that are no longer the same as before, with mourning serving as the opposite of the bond (Tavares, 2018). Parkes (2009) states that bereaved individuals may experience a change in their perception of the world and themselves.

The discovery of benefits refers to finding positive outcomes in the face of adversity, such as increased compassion (Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema & Larson, 1998; Bogensperger & Lueger-Schuster, 2014). The participants in the research carried out by Andriessen, Krysinska, Richwood and Pirkis (2020) also evidenced various aspects of personal growth, such as personal growth (including self-awareness and discovery of new possibilities), improved interpersonal relationships (including greater compassion, altruism and giving back to others) and a greater appreciation of life, which was also perceived by the participants in this research.

> I do social work, I started collaborating with other mothers who had also lost their children to suicide, through WhatsApp. On Facebook there are pages, you go there and there is "depression", they are pages encouraging self-mutilation, suicide. So, we reported it and talked to the young people... It has helped me a lot. (Raquel)

> The group is important. Having a meaning. Sofia's death was not in vain, today I help people, I talk about it, it is a way of carrying on. Not to lose a sense of meaning. I talk to people I know, people I do not know... Today I know more, for example, I am more worried about my son, I know he is going through a complicated situation, because of Sofia's death, I am with him all the time, helping, looking after him. (Luiz)

After losing their child, many participants found purpose in raising awareness about suicide and supporting others experiencing similar struggles. They engaged in projects to help those in need and accompanied other bereaved parents or survivors. The search for meaning was driven by the parents' concern for their child's purpose in life (Meert et al., 2009; Bogensperger & Lueger-Schuster, 2014).

Four participants chose to collaborate with other survivors, whether they were bereaved or going through similar challenges, in order to find meaning in the loss of their children. They viewed their own bereavement experience as a source of personal growth and learning. This process of transforming their perceived world involved finding and giving meaning through the narrative experience of continuity and changing beliefs (Luna & Moré, 2019).

> And then I bought a three, and she asked me to plant it. We took everything and went to plant it... This tree had never given flowers, after her death it was the first year that it started to bloom... I watched a movie, saw the results of what she had planted, even took a few pieces, and gave them to some people and told my wife: look at Vanessa's work. I took it to her university, as part of the Life in the Fields project. (Marcelo)

Even when taking new actions, some bereaved choose to maintain their emotional connection to the deceased and believe that their loved one continues to have a presence in

their family's lives. Therefore, one coping mechanism for dealing with death is to preserve the significance of their departed relatives within the family even after their passing (Begley & Quayle, 2007).

All participants in this study reported making changes and seeking ways to maintain a sense of continuity for their deceased child, whether through supporting projects, organ donation, or embracing the symbolism of nature and art. This perspective aligns with the findings of Field and Wogrin (2011), who suggest that the deceased serves as a background presence in guiding the bereaved towards a new life. Some participants have become activists in the field of suicide prevention, viewing it as their life's purpose. According to Rangel (2008), the relationship between parents and children does not end with death but undergoes a restructuring and redefinition, allowing for symbolic interaction in the absence of physical presence.

> I went on living, falling, moaning, suffering, often supported, embraced, welcomed. And then I managed to walk, and that is why I think I have reached a place in my mourning of comfort. That is the word I use. I am in comfortable mourning. (Marília)

> I have never been the same, there is no way, today I am better than before. I do more things that make sense, the group, being a militant in this cause, I am different. I have happy moments, I can laugh, talk about things, but there are still days when it is difficult, even to breathe. (Luiz)

The participants emphasized that the suicide death of their children became the central event in their lives. Suicide forces individuals to urgently search for new meanings in order to continue living, despite the tragic loss. This highlights the paradox of existence: because from the moment it is realized the loved one finitude, it is also noticed the experiences that remain from the relationship with the person who committed suicide (Fukumitsu & Kovács, 2016).

Final considerations

This study aimed to understand the quest for meaning in life following the loss of a child. The desire to talk about their child beyond the death and previous problems was highlighted by all the participants; they often pointed out that their child's life story often remained overshadowed by their death. Talking about their child, telling stories that happened

before the death and expressing their pain were desires brought up by the parents, but they often encountered discomfort from others when doing so.

This discomfort stems from the desire to distance themselves from the themes of finitude, suicide, and loss since these subjects are often socially repudiated. Thus, seeking out mental health professionals or groups of mourners and survivors was a resource used to be able to speak freely. The conclusion is that talking about their child, about death, about pain, as well as seeking a safe space with other people who have experienced loss, were important strategies for the grieving process of these participants.

Additionally, the participants used their children's stories as inspiration to create new life projects that held significant meaning. Some even became activists in this cause, in other words, they developed projects related to mental health, suicide or bereavement, with the intention of disseminating information and care spaces to other grieving people. They chose to create or join groups for the bereaved, support or develop social projects connected to their child's life or death and continue fulfilling their caring role.

Some of these projects, such as caring for people with suicidal ideation or setting up support groups, stemmed from the lack of support they felt during the grieving process itself. They expressed frustration over the insufficient information available on suicide, grieving, and the absence of dedicated spaces for parents who have lost a child to suicide. Creating these new projects allowed them to find new purpose in life and honor the memory of their child. In addition, many of the paths used in the search for meaning involve maintaining a connection with their deceased child as a way to continue their parental care.

This study results provide important support for further research into caring for parents bereaved by suicide. It is important to consider that the participants in this research were chosen through support groups, which is a widespread support resource for all of the interviewees. It is important to emphasize the importance of future research looking at specific forms of mental health care to help the grieving process of the people who lost their child to suicide, such as psychoeducation, post-intervention activities and support groups, which enable them to integrate the loss.

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