OBJECTIVE: Suicide bereavement research can help facilitate greater understanding of the impact of suicide and potential risks for others. As there is limited research on the experience of young people who lose a friend to suicide, the aim of this exploratory study was to consider specific psychological factors for such bereaved young people.

METHODS: Ten young people who had experienced the suicide death of a friend completed self-report measures to assess levels of depression, anxiety, coping and prolonged grief.

RESULTS: Participants reported increased levels of stress, depression, reduced coping capacity and prolonged grief symptoms that have continued considerably beyond the death of their friend.

CONCLUSIONS: Psychological distress for young people bereaved by a friend's suicide is of concern given the developmental changes and life transitions associated with this age group. Implications include the significant health and wellbeing challenges associated with suicide bereavement for young people. The outcomes support a more proactive response from mental health and support services.

KEYWORDS: bereavement, coping, depression, grief, suicide, young people

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