



NEWSLETTER

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JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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(608) 280-2435

ANTICIPATING THE HOLIDAYS



by Marc Schnipper, Volunteer Facilitator, SOS Support Group

Losing a friend or loved one is always difficult. Suicide complicates our grief and can make the holidays more challenging. The holidays awaken memories of the past and elicit emotions that are both happy and sad. There is shopping and cooking and traveling and stress. Why?

- Having unrealistic expectations of family, friends and ourselves.
- Changing family dynamics after a suicide loss.
- Deciding whether to continue established traditions or create new ones.
- Finding the “perfect” gifts.
- Overwhelming “to-do” lists.
- Envisioning future events and fretting about what will happen.

Please consider the following ways to lessen holiday stress.

- Try to keep your expectations realistic.
- Keep an open mind and accept that not everything will be perfect.
- Ask people if there is a gift they’d like or give gift cards.
- Donate to charity or volunteer to help others.
- Know where to find non-judgmental, supportive people if you need to talk.
- Practice self-care. Be kind, gentle and patient with yourself.

You may find your grief is punctuated by moments of laughter and joy and happiness — accept them.

They are not disrespectful. They are signs your heart is beginning to heal and they are truly a gift.

LOCAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MADISON

INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS DAY, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2018

This is the 20th year of a program promoted by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). Gatherings are held throughout the world on this day. Our local conference is independently sponsored by Journey Mental Health Center and the Survivors of Suicide Support Group.

It is a day of remembrance and healing for those who have lost someone to suicide and those who care about them. It is an opportunity for the survivor community to come together for support, information and empowerment. Family, friends, professional and non-professional caregivers are encouraged to attend.

Our local morning conference will include viewing of this year’s new film documentary, “A Daughter’s Journey,” produced by AFSP.

See the enclosed registration form for details.

More information, including how to view the documentary online, at www.afsp/survivorday.

Anticipating the Holidays

Local Conference to be Held in Madison for International Survivors Of Suicide Loss Day

Reinvention — Life After Loss



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REINVENTION — LIFE AFTER LOSS



*Blog post by Natalie O'Brien from Oct. 2017
<https://metamorphosis686.wordpress.com/>*

It's been 1.5 years since Chuck ended his own life. Since that day, death and suicide have been a part of my everyday consciousness. Thoughts of him, our life together, and the ultimate demise weave in and out of my mind throughout the day. But now, instead of his death instilling gut-wrenching fear and shock, I've started to accept it as part of my evolving life story.

I've finally realized that Chuck's death will not define me, but I think it will definitely REDEFINE me. I will never be the person that I was before. His death has drastically changed the way I perceive the world, it has changed how I prioritize what's important to me, and ultimately I think it has shifted my life course. I'm not sure where my life will lead or who this new version of me will be, but Chuck's death has awakened me and it has started to propel me out of stagnation.

Since his death I now speak and write more freely because I don't care as much what people think about me or my ideas. Part of being a suicide survivor is eventually accepting that your life/story is going to make many people uncomfortable. But, to live genuinely I can't continue worrying about how other people perceive me. Not only has this helped me talk more openly about suicide, but it's helped me be more honest and open in all facets of my life.

Having firsthand experience with traumatic loss has also helped me to see how fleeting life can be. So since Chuck's death, I say "YES" more. I want to truly live NOW so I say "YES" to more life experiences. I say yes to adventures, yes to love, yes to dessert, yes to adult dance classes, yes to writing, and I say yes to anyone in need.

But I also say "NO" more. Now I say "NO" to things that don't bring me joy or don't bring joy to the people I love. I don't feel obligated to do anything because someone else thinks that I "should." I say no to expectations of others, say no to societal conventions/pressures, say no to mom guilt, say no to pettiness and I say no to someone else's version of me.

I wish I didn't understand death so intimately and I wouldn't wish my life experience on anyone else. But, there is no way to change the past so I'm striving to appreciate the perspective it's giving me. I'm trying my best to own it and grow from it.

*Natalie's husband died in March 2016.
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"Grief never ends... But it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith...It is the price of love."

— Author unknown

SEEING GHOSTS



Marcie attended the local agricultural fair with her friends. They toured the animal pens to look at the sheep, pigs and cows. They walked into a tent to look at all the ribbons adorning fresh-baked pies and cakes. As they made their way through the crowds, Marcie thought she saw someone familiar. She peered through groups of people to get another look. It was Sean. Her brother. The brother who completed suicide five years before. She was sure it was him. She started toward him, stepping up her pace. This couldn't be real, she thought, as she picked her way through the throngs of people. He was headed for

the exit. But when she reached the outdoors, he had disappeared. This phenomenon happens to many suicide survivors. Because someone we loved died so suddenly and without warning, we have the feeling they could reappear in our lives at any moment. All it takes is a glimpse of someone who slightly resembles our loved ones and all those feelings can come flooding back.

I see you; I love you I miss you.

*From Healing the Hurt Spirit, Daily Affirmations for
People Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide*

"Her absence is like the sky, spread over everything."

C.S. Lewis from A Grief Observed



A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Peg Maginnis in memory of her son Patrick

Journey Mental Health Center (for sponsorship)

To make a tax deductible donation online by credit card, visit www.journeymhc.org/donate and designate "Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Support Group" in the pull-down menu option.

To make a tax deductible donation by check, make it payable to Journey Mental Health Center with SOS in the memo line. Mail to:

Survivors of Suicide Support Group, c/o Journey Mental Health Center,
25 Kessel Court, Suite 105, Madison, WI 53711



WEATHER CAUSED SUPPORT GROUP CANCELLATION IN AUGUST: FIRST TIME IN 38 YEARS

In the past we feared the possibility of needing to cancel a group meeting due to winter weather in Wisconsin. This time, on August 28, the predicted threat of rain, wind and flooding prompted the decision to err on the side of safety for all.

The Support Group will continue to meet throughout the year on our regular schedule. If there is a question as to weather conditions, a cancellation decision will be made by 3 p.m. on the meeting day. Information will be on the Journey Website, www.journeymhc.org, or by calling 608/280-2700.



SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP SCHEDULE

A self-help group for adults who are grieving the death of a loved one by suicide.

2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, 7 – 9 p.m.

Hosted at Journey Mental Health Center, 49 Kessel Ct., Madison WI 53711

There is free parking in front of the building. To gain entry, press the call button and indicate that you are attending the SOS meeting. You will be greeted by one of the SOS team.

Please arrive by 6:50. **The building locks at 7 p.m.** If necessary follow call directions posted on the door by using a cell phone to alert the group if you need late entry.

OCTOBER						
	9					
	23					

NOVEMBER						
		13				
	27					

DECEMBER						
		11				

JANUARY 2019						
		8				
		22				

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, November 17 – International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Local Morning Conference at Journey Mental Health Center
Reservations appreciated by Friday, November 9.

SOS Confidential Email: sos@journeymhc.org

SOS Confidential Voicemail: 608/280-2435

24/7 Year 'Round Mental Health Crisis Line: 608/280-2600

Journey Mental Health Center Website: www.journeymhc.org

Select Programs & Services, Community-Based Services, Survivors of Suicide



SOS
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- By phone message to (608) 280-2435
- By mail at the address above.