



NEWSLETTER

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JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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(608) 280-2435

*“Years end is neither end or a beginning but a going on
with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.”*

—Hal Borland

FOR THE NEW YEAR



by Mary Ehmann

Instead of the old kind of New Year’s resolutions we used to make and break, let’s make some this year and really try to keep them:

- Try not to imagine the future. Take one day at a time.
- Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
- Don’t shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
- Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, other family members, and friends. If each of us is unique and different, how can there be perfect understanding?
- When a good day comes, relish it. Don’t feel guilty and don’t be discouraged because it doesn’t last.
- Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water, take vitamins, rest (even if you don’t sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal, as well as your mind.
- Share your feeling with other compassionate friends, and let them share with you. You will find that as you begin caring about the pain of others, you will start to come out of your shell—a very healthy sign.

I know that following these resolutions won’t be easy, but what has been? It is worth a try. There is nothing to lose, and perhaps much to gain.

APRIL NEWSLETTER TO BE REMEMBRANCE ISSUE

There are many ways to remember the lives of those who have died by suicide. Our April issue will provide an opportunity to name those who have died and make a short statement about them. We invite new readers or those who have been long time readers of this newsletter to honor a loved one in this way.

Please return the enclosed form by Friday, March 8, 2019 in order to be included.



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REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS DAY



Each year the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention sponsors a program which has become a national and international event. On Saturday, November 17, 2018 our local event brought together survivors and those who support them. Our gathering, sponsored by Journey Mental Health Center and the Survivors of Suicide Support Group, provided an opportunity for interaction, remembrance and access to resources. Music was provided throughout the morning by Shawndell Marks and Beth Kille.

After a continental breakfast, a video produced by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention was shown. This year's theme was, "A Daughter's Journey." The video featured a young girl who had lost her father sharing how the death had affected her and her family. Her story offered a hopeful perspective to survivors who feel the need to reorganize their lives after a suicide loss.

The video was followed by a facilitated group discussion which focused on our reactions to the film. Local participants had an opportunity to relate their own experiences. The program concluded with a Remembrance Ritual where each guest had an opportunity to write a message regarding their loved one and select a donated glass bead sun catcher or necklace memento to take home.

Before leaving there was an offering of coffee and pie choices from Hubbard Avenue Diner. Thank you to all who participated and to the SOS team of professionals and volunteers who organized the event.

This year's video along with past presentations can be viewed at afsp.org.

WORDS FROM THE CREATORS OF GLASS BEAD MEMENTOS

"Creating our sun catchers and necklaces became a personal way for us to cope with the loss of someone dear. Living with grief is exhausting—day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, breath by breath.

We focused on honoring our loved one's beautiful

soul by creating something full of color and life. These creations are in memory of a true artist—Phil Keleny. We hope the brilliant colors remind you of the beauty of your loved one's memory."

WORDS FROM A SONG OFFERING "THE NEW NORMAL"

Written and sung by Beth Kille

When you were you, you brought the colors
found in the flowers of the fields
Oh it was normal for you to chase
all of the colors you could embrace
To weave vibrant tapestries and paint future memories

But now the new normal has changed
to something new

When you were grown you found the rainbows
shine in all corners of your room
Oh it was normal for you to find
all of the colors of a beautiful mind
to spark creations, build loving relations

But now the new normal has changed
to something new

People say death makes the phoenix rise anew
And there's new music playing because of you
But if it were up to me, I'd make the old normal do

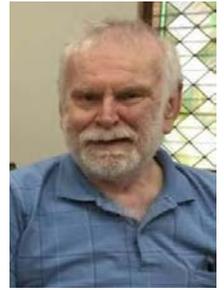
Repeated Chorus:

It's the new normal, but it's not the same
You can't come over when I call your name
Your laughter, it can't ring through the air
It'll never be the same but I'll always care
Because in my new normal our love is still there
.....Our love is still there

DENNIS GATES 1948–2018

We are saddened to share the news of Dennis' death on Sept. 24, 2018 after multiple health struggles. Dennis was a long-time dedicated volunteer with SOS. He attended the support group after the loss of his 17-year-old son Justin to suicide. Dennis went on to be trained as a Support Group facilitator and also participated in other groups involved in suicide prevention. He was a diligent advocate for suicide intervention, prevention, and postvention.

Memorials may be directed to Journey Mental Health Center/SOS.



This article written for our Newsletter by Dennis Gates in July 2006 is still relevant today.

UNLIKELY HELPERS *by Dennis Gates, Volunteer, Survivors of Suicide*



“It is important, when dealing with all aspects of grief, to keep the process moving. The temptation is to freeze, to stay perpetually recoiled against so terrible a blow.”

—Martha Whitmore Hickman

At a retreat I attended recently, I was part of a group that was discussing our individual experiences of loss by suicide. One common experience was we thought that we had become more sensitive than we had been before. We also thought our sensitivity was now greater than that of individuals who had not had a similar loss. We thought we had become more inclined to help those who had lost hope and more inclined to listen to, and sympathize with, others' grief.

Part of our evidence for this was in the insensitivity we have experienced from others. These are the people who told us our loved one was selfish for “choosing” suicide. They are the ones who told us our loved one is “better off,” that we “should get on with our lives,” and so on.

We realized that was how we might have been in the past. We hoped we are now different.

I believe we should thank those people for showing us how we used to be. I believe their insensitivity comes from ignorance, whether through a lack of experience or through fear they could be the next to suffer a loss. Or perhaps they have had this insensitivity pounded into them, the way they are trying to pound it into us. Either way, they are more an object lesson to us in our own humanity than a demonstration of their inhumanity.

Elsewhere in this newsletter there is a poem about the help we will get from other people as we travel our journey of grief. That poem was written to point out the hope and comfort we find with many “nice” people. I am writing here to point out the help we can find with some “not so nice” people or at least people who may say some not so nice things. We must also remember the hope and comfort we can find within ourselves.

Iris Bolton, in “My Son. My Son,” assures us that we

can survive, even if we think we can't. The power to heal is within us. We have the power to survive, even thrive. Our “helpers along the way” can help us with this process. The “others” cannot stop it. These “others” might not “know the right words to share” or “when to say them”.... they might run and hide when you cry and might misunderstand when you laugh.... they might not have a clue what you're dealing with and might not be willing to learn. They are so afraid of “it.”

As the poem says: “Don't be afraid of what they might think.” They have no power over you.

HELPERS ALONG THE WAY

by Kathy Ayling, Rockford, IL

You will have many helpers
As you travel on this journey.

You may not even realize who they all are
Until your journey is complete.

Be open to accept their help,
For they've been through this
With so many others before you.

These helpers, I believe,
Are special people...

They know the right words to share
And when to say them...

You will share with them
Things never mentioned to anyone before.

They'll be there when you cry
And also when you laugh.

They understand exactly the depth of what it is
You're dealing with on this journey of yours.

Don't be afraid of what they might think,
They've probably seen and heard it all before.

Just think of where we'd be if
We had to travel this journey alone.

A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



Steven & Debra Alles
in memory of Dewayne Henderson

Virginia Behring
in memory of son Jonathan Behring

Donna Bichanich
in memory of husband Craig

Pat Derer
in memory of son Daryl Derer

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in memory of Mike Dinkel

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in memory of Tony Bladl

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in memory of brother George Frederick, cousin
Jon Smith, friend Rob Frank

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in memory of son Tony Killian

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in memory of grandson Dustin Tarkenton

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in memory of husband Carl

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Janice Williams
in memory of Michael Lake

Darlene Woldt
in memory of son Derek Walsvick

Journey Mental Health Center (for Sponsorship)

In memory of Dennis Gates
Haskins, Short & Brindley, LLC
Catherine Gates
Jeanne Moren

For Survivor Day Conference
Shawni Marks & Beth Kille–Music
Creators of the Glass Bead Mementos
in memory of Phil Keleny
Peder & Jeanne Moren–Pies from Hubbard Ave. Diner
The SOS Team and professional staff
of Journey Mental Health Center

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

H.O.P.E.S. CHOOSES TO CONTINUE SUPPORT TO SOS



HOPES (Helping Others Prevent and Educate about Suicide) has directed a generous financial gift to SOS. The HOPES group has ended their work as an official organization. Many of those individuals who started, maintained and worked diligently with this wonderful group in its 20 years of existence were originally participants in the SOS Support Group.

HOPES’ efforts were focused on suicide prevention and partnered with Journey Mental Health on many

programs including our International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Conference. HOPES has always understood and appreciated the value of support offered to those who have had a suicide loss. It is clear that interactions after a loss (postvention) works as a form of prevention.

Thank you HOPES for the most generous sharing of your remaining funds.

THE VALUE OF SUPPORT



“...A group enables a survivor to gather the strengths needed to survive. The experience of being in the physical presence of other survivors has, in itself a therapeutic value which cannot be duplicated by any other methods of resolving grief, A veteran survivor can instill a subtle message of hope with his or her very existence. Bringing survivors together

provides a forum for nearly every facet of their “unbearable” sorrow. Eventually the pain becomes ordinary; it never completely goes away but it’s effectively integrated so that the survivor can return to a constructive life in spite of the tragedy of suicide.”

Quote by Rev. Charles T. Rubey, Catholic Charities, Chicago.

SOS SUPPORT GROUP PURPOSE

To share experiences for living and coping beyond suicide loss

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.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
8			9
	12	12	
22			23
	26	26	

SOS 2019 SCHEDULE

January 8 & 22	April 9 & 23	July 9 & 23	October 8 & 22
February 12 & 26	May 14 & 28	August 13 & 27	November 12 & 26
March 12 & 26	June 11 & 25	September 10 & 24	December 10

WILL WEATHER CAUSE A SOS SUPPORT GROUP CANCELLATION?

In case of inclement or dangerous weather a determination of whether the group will meet will be made by 3:00 pm the day of the meeting.

You may call Journey Mental Health Center main reception (608)280-2700 to see if the Center is closed or Emergency Services reception for information (608) 280-2580.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Friday March 8 – Remembrance Forms due

Sunday April 14 – U.W. Campus Out of the Darkness Walk; info at suicidepreventionuw.org

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
JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER
25 KESSEL CT SUITE 105
MADISON, WI 53711

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- By email at sos@journeymhc.org
- By phone message to (608) 280-2435
- By mail at the address above.