



NEWSLETTER

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JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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(608) 280-2435

LOCAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MADISON FOR INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS DAY SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2019



This is the 21st year of a program promoted by AFSP (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention). Gatherings are held throughout the world on this day. Our local conference is independently sponsored by Journey Mental Health Center/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 for survivors provided by AFSP.

See the enclosed registration form for details.

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

MAKING IT THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS



Holidays are difficult for all who have lost a loved one to suicide, but especially hard for the newly bereaved survivor. The tendency is to remember happier holidays spent with all family members present. As the years go by, sadness lingers, but it becomes less overwhelming.

Most survivors find it helps to have a holiday plan and to change some family traditions. Following are some suggestions from experienced survivors.

- Take care of yourself. Eat right, schedule time for exercise, and get plenty of sleep.
- Do holiday shopping early to eliminate unnecessary stress.
- Decide what you can handle comfortably, and let those needs be known to family, friends and relatives.
- If things aren't going well, set limits. Do only what is most important to you.
- Plan your holidays ahead of time. Relieve tension by having a schedule of known activities.
- Don't hesitate to make changes in your holiday traditions. It can make things less painful.
- Start a new tradition — one as simple as discarding

an old recipe and trying a new one or changing the time you open gifts.

- Plan to be with people you enjoy.
- Buy something special for yourself.

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- If you need to cry, remember that tears are an honest expression of love and emotion.
- Consider spending the holidays away from home.
- If the thought of sending holiday cards is too painful, give yourself permission not to send them.
- If you feel uncomfortable about having one missing Christmas stocking, don't hang any or substitute something else to fill.
- Do something for others. Give your favorite

charity a gift in memory of your loved one or invite a senior citizen or foreign student to share your festivities.

- Refer to the deceased when you discuss past holidays with family and friends. Some survivors feel disappointed when their loved one is omitted from holiday conversations.

Adapted from Los Angeles "Survivors After Suicide" newsletter, December 1991

THANKSGIVING

by Meg Avery



The time draws near and the calendar says
Thanksgiving is really here.
Time to reflect and time to gather thoughts of what to
be thankful for.

Thankful? I think not.
My life is not full these days, and to be thankful is
beyond my grasp.

But to give thanks? This, I believe, can be done.

Searching my soul deep within,
reasons to find thanks surface to the edge.

Yes, I give thanks for the memories of yesterdays:
The love, the laughter, the joy of each day when
James was with us.
The trials and tribulations of being an active parent.
The rewards and the challenges of raising a child.
The days of blissful ignorance when I thought tragedy
would never visit our home.
The days when life was normal, even though I took it
all for granted.

For the treasures of today:
The sunrise, sunset, the changing of the seasons.
The new-found friends along this journey I reluctantly
travel.
The tried and true friends who stand by me still
The strong and everlasting love of my husband.

The warmth and wet kisses from my canine
companion and feline friend.
The encouragement and support, compassion and
caring I give and receive as I survive
and help others survive.

For the hopes and possibilities of a peaceful
tomorrow: with faith, love and perseverance
as I struggle to move on, with James in my heart
forevermore,
Spiritually guiding me with his new presence,
with sorrow and reluctance, each new day, to yet,
somehow, be open and loving.
Not to forsake what I've learned because of what I've
lost.

You see, it's not about keeping up with the Joneses,
having an SUV or two in the garage, having the
largest baby beanie collection,
having so many CDs, video games, or the newest,
most improved, latest and most improved new
gadgets, not even being up-to-date with state-of-
the-art technology.

It's about love.
It's about the gifts of yesterday,
blended with the blessing of today to make
meaning for tomorrow.

*Reprinted from The Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles,
Vol. 20, No 11, November 2004*

"The point arrives when the decision can be made if your sadness is a stage or an identity."

— Unknown

FOR BETTER OR WORSE



by Maribeth Wilder

Even though you both lost the same child at the same time, the grief process itself is not a shared experience. It is an extremely personal journey that no two people will travel the same way. Your most important step is to recognize that you will probably grieve differently from your partner.

For many of you, this is your first encounter with death. While your feelings may be the same (anger, sorrow, guilt, depression), your reactions to those emotions and your timetable for grief are unique. Everyone grieves differently. We grieve differently as men and women. We grieve differently as individuals. We react to crisis according to our personalities. We are not born knowing how to grieve. It is a reluctantly acquired skill, something we learn with each loss in life. We learn through the loss of a part in a school play, loss of a job, or the loss of a loved one.

Society influences your grief, too. Men are often taught from an early age to suppress their feelings. Our culture says men should be strong and protect their families. Tears may be seen as a sign of weakness. Friends will usually ask Dad how Mom is feeling, rather than asking how HE is doing. Such neglect of Dad's feelings may add pressure for him to get on with the business of living. It encourages denial of his grief.

Work becomes a haven from pain. Men are often not as communicative or as demonstrative as women, and may feel uncomfortable talking about their feelings. Dad may think talking or crying will be too upsetting for Mom. She sees his silence as a lack of love for their child, because she doesn't see his real feelings.

Women usually grow up learning that it is okay and natural for them to express feelings. Today most people are uncomfortable with death. What was once seen as an appropriate display of emotion may now be seen as over-reacting. Mom learns to show her

feelings to those she hopes will understand. If Dad is uncomfortable with tears, Mom may feel stifled and restrict her grief to privacy and friends.

If heart-to-heart talks were not your strong suit before your child died, chances are it will be even more difficult now. It helps to make a point to talk. You can schedule times for a grief chat to express needs and share feelings. Each of you must state your needs and share your feelings. Each of you needs permission to grieve.

If you want to cry, tell your mate that your tears are healing. If you need some space, make your desires known. When your spouse tells you a need, acknowledge and encourage those feelings. Grief is very self-absorbing. Explain your feelings carefully. Don't assume your spouse can mind-read and know how you feel. Lack of communication and assuming feelings are two very destructive pitfalls!

When talking, give each other undivided attention. Listening is a key part of communication. Look at each other. Touch each other. A response is important, and may be as simple as a nod or a hug. If you feel your partner isn't communicating enough, say so. Be sure to encourage every effort.

Each of you has individual strengths and weaknesses that will complement each other as you work through this process. Have patience with each other and yourself. Don't expect your partner to be your only source of help. Healing begins from within. Share your progress with each other, and celebrate your success. Share your bad days, and allow those tears. Make it a point to look forward, and soon your feet will follow. You will find the light at the end of the tunnel — probably not at the same time, but you will find it.

*Reprinted from The Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles,
Vol. 23, No.1, Jan. 2007*

“WHY?”

That's what we ask. The truth is, we may never be able to know for sure “why.”
But we do know that there is no single “should have done” or “could have done”
or “did” or “didn't do” that would have changed that “why.”
All that “love could do was done”.....

— By Jason Iseley in memory of his Dad, Robert Craig Iseley

A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



Kathy Saunders

Several donations in memory of Christopher Bertram

Karen Mojka in memory of Troy Balistreri

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

TWO THOUGHTS ON TIME FOR SURVIVORS



TIME

by Charles Brown, Vacaville, CA

Time seems to be so very important to us. Our lives evolve around time. We seem to always want to do things on a timely basis. We can't be late for work or forget those important birthdays or anniversaries. We are always looking ahead to see what the future will bring us, in just a matter of time.

When we become a survivor time is in some respects our worst enemy. You see, time hasn't changed but we have. Our view of time was consistent in whatever we seemed to do. Now time doesn't seem to go as fast as it did. Time seems to keep us where we are longer. At least that is our perception.

Survivors want to rush time. We want that quick fix. We want our grief to go away. We want our lives back, as much as possible, the way they used to be. We want to avoid the pain we go through or at least make it shorter in length.

I believe it is natural to want time to slow down when you are happy and speed up when you're not. Who in their right mind would want to be unhappy for a long time? We all want to cherish, to the full extent, the good times.

I believe, however, that we should not be too anxious to go through our grief in a fast pace. I feel time is actually our friend in grief. I feel we need to slowly learn from our loss and how it impacts us so we can appreciate more the loved ones we now have.

We must stay away from others telling us how much time it will take us to go through our grief. There is no time table per se. Each person, man or woman, is different and therefore will take their individual time lengths to grieve.

Reprinted from Comforting Friends Newsletter, Sacramento, CA, March, 2006

TIME

by Margaret Gerner

Time is the passing of moments lived one at a time. Our recovery depends on what we do with each moment. We cannot sit back and say, “Time will heal me.” Time is merely the movement of the clock.

Our successful return to comfortable living is what we do while the clock is moving. We have to look at the beauty left us in life instead of what we no longer have. We must find reasons to go on.

Source: The Compassionate Friends

“Wounds do not heal without time and attention. Yet, too many of us feel that we don't have the right to take the time to heal from emotional and physical wounds.”

— From Judy Tatelbaum's *Courage to Grieve*

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, Kessel Ct., Madison WI 53711

Due to a building issue in Building 49 we will be meeting across the parking lot in Building 25 on the lower level until further notice.

There is free parking in front of this building and elevator access to the meeting room.

Please follow signage as you enter the building.

You will be greeted by one of the SOS team until 7:00.

Please arrive by 6:50. If necessary follow the call directions posted on the door by using a cell phone to alert the group if you need late entry.

OCTOBER						
	8					
	22					

NOVEMBER						
		12				
		26				

DECEMBER						
		10				
		No group				

JANUARY						
			14			
			28			

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 p.m. 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.

WHY JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP?



Many suicide loss survivors are confused about the grief they feel after losing someone to suicide. It is difficult to speak with family and friends about how intense the feelings are. It is common to think that there is no one who would possibly understand how you feel and that you would never discuss your feelings in public.

A suicide loss support group is where people who have lost someone to suicide gather and discuss the exact feelings you have about suicide loss. It is a

compassionate group who are seeking healing. There is no right and no wrong in a support group. Everyone is entitled to their own feelings. Many people's eyes open up and they realize that they are not alone. There is healing in conversation with others.

Source: Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group, Madison, NJ

“One often calms one’s grief by recounting it.”

– Pierre Corneille

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



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