



NEWSLETTER

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JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

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(608) 280-2435

THE "NEW YEAR" ... A PERSONAL VIEW



by Lynn Goldade, SOS Newsletter Contributor

There is so much activity around the holidays and everything requires a great deal of planning and organizing (even to just get ourselves to the particular activity.) Then there are the New Year's resolutions. All the promises to... *start over... to do... to be better* — the holidays will wear any person out. But we are no longer just *any* person. We are more than tired. We're exhausted from the long period of grieving. We're physically and mentally drained.

People mean well when they ask about the holidays, New Year's plans, resolutions. But sometimes it's hard not to be hurt by these well-meaning comments. Some of us have already had to "*start over*" from a recent loss. We've been through enough "*change*" and "*starting over*" to last a lifetime. Too many "*changes*" can be overwhelming. And we've "*started over*" so much that

we want to scream, "NO... Enough is enough... Leave me alone."

Don't be afraid to politely say, "No more changes... Please, I've had enough... Let me rest awhile." Rest is very helpful to let your mind and body heal.

The following quote gives me hope during the long winter months. My wish is that it does the same for you.

"These days are the winter of the soul, but spring comes and brings new life and beauty, because of the growth of roots in the dark..."

— from Iris Bolton, 'My Son, My Son'

This article first appeared in the SOS Newsletter, January 1999

In the depth of winter, I finally learned that, within me there lay an invincible summer.

— Albert Camus

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 6, 2020 in order to be included.

One kind word can warm three winter months.

— Japanese Proverb



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GRIEF SHARING



By Cynthia Waderlow

Recently, seeing families when fresh grief is etched on the faces of parents, I've thought about what a significant experience it is for children to see the impact of immense loss on their caretakers. Most parents are concerned at first that their grief will negatively affect their children. They worry that if children see them emotionally out of control that they will be damaged.

Families who have lost a child or parent to suicide will reel from the loss. We know that families will feel derailed for a period of time until they engage in a process of healing. What are the risks to children when parents are immersed in grief?

A child's exposure to unchecked hysteria is not beneficial. It can be frightening, and creates a barrier to sharing, intimacy and hope, and isolation in grief produces confusion and a sense of abandonment. Better to be accessible to our children even if we feel broken and explain simply that time is needed for healing. Asking for childcare from a friend or relative if you feel debilitated by grief offers precious support. Presence to your own pain and the concomitant needs of your children is possible when grief offers children the freedom to approach or find alternative comfort.

Grief is a normal life process whose intensity requires the feelings to be lived. There is no harm in children witnessing deep sadness and tears as long as their security needs are met. Seeing parents who are openly grieving may create indelible memories in the mind of the child, but your grief prepares them to grieve their own losses to be faced when they are adults. Children, even teens, look to their parents for cues on how to react to the world and the events that shape their lives. It can be helpful to normalize feelings and expression whether a death represents a traumatic loss or one of natural causes. When we attempt to suppress our emotions, we may give children the impression that they should not be open about their own feelings. But witnessing a parent's grief will give the child permission to express their emotions. Certainly, weeping with sorrow will likely capture your child's attention. The child may hover and try to protect you. In response, offer assurance that your tears are normal, and are not to be feared; "I love you, and we are going to be okay, we will get through this." This simple, powerful message offers hope, and the sense that an unexpected, difficult change can be met with effort together.

After a suicide, your grief may include fierce secondary emotions like guilt or anger and blame. These are also normal feelings. But they are part of your individual narrative regarding the loss. We want to avoid imposing our interior battles on children, just as we don't discuss other adult material around them. Addressing these issues with a bereavement counselor allows us to separate this part of our struggle from children, so that they have the freedom over time to develop their own sense of meaning around a life-changing loss. There is nothing wrong with admitting that you have some feelings of anger, just as the child may. If a child feels abandoned, anger is understandable and needs to be talked about. Death is sad and scary, and learning to talk about feelings helps feelings to get processed and recede. Bereavement counseling is good for children too. It is a goal that children will find their own narrative for the loss experience that may soften over time with compassion.

Similar to airplane safety, the caregiver must provide immediate self-care prior to attending to their children. This protocol works in a crisis. After a traumatic loss, adults should find a way to create safety and stability, and then attend to the needs of the children. Sharing feelings and affirming the thoughts and feelings of your child's expressions marks the beginning of the family's journey into healing.

*Obelisk Newsletter, October 2019, LOSS program,
Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide,
www.catholiccharities.net/loss*

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS RETURN TO BUILDING 49 AT KESSEL CT.

After a reconstruction project at 49 Kessel Court, we will be holding our twice monthly meetings in our original meeting room there starting in January 2020. Our 1st meeting of the year will be on January 14th. We are pleased to be back in the space which also houses our lending library.

The year's schedule and details are printed on page 5 of this newsletter.

What the New Year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the New Year.

— Vern McLellan



SOME THOUGHTS ARE TIMELESS

This was shared in "Dear Friends," a booklet published by the Brooklyn Heights Survivor Group, Brooklyn, New York, 1990

Loss changes people. We are not now the same people we were before our loved one died and we will never be the same again. This is very hard for us and for those around us to understand, and if we keep waiting for the old self to come back, we could get stuck in our recovery. Instead, we are becoming new creatures with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. We have to try and get comfortable with our new selves.

At this time, we desperately need the support of those around us — other family members, friends, co-workers, etc. But we often find that that support is not forthcoming, that these people shy away from us at the very times we need them the most. Solutions to this are hard to come by, and it is often a main

reason we seek out support groups, so we can have sympathetic people to talk with. At the same time, we can encourage supportive actions from others by helping them learn what is helpful to us. Keep in mind that they have good intentions and want to do what is right, but just don't know what to do with us. Be frank, but in a kind way. Tell them, for example, not to worry if you cry, that it's good for you. Tell them it's OK to talk about your loved one. Thank them for whatever thoughtful things they do, and let them know if they do something unintentional that also helps. It may well be that seeing your gratitude, they will repeat their kindnesses and perhaps your wish to have more understanding friends and relatives will come true.

THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

by Nancy Myerholts

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile
The first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal.
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friend who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.

— From Compassionate Friends, Cape Cod



INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS DAY CONFERENCE WAS HELD NOVEMBER 23, 2019

A morning program of remembrance and support was held locally, sponsored by Journey Mental Health Survivors of Suicide and by American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). Included was a continental breakfast, resources, display of SOS Memory Quilts, group viewing of a video produced by AFSP followed by discussion. This Day is recognized throughout the world and offers an opportunity for survivors and those who care for them to gather.

Those in attendance were able to interact with other survivors in a supportive setting. After a brief, meaningful remembrance ritual our morning closed with pie and conversation. Origami cranes were

distributed as a token for the participants to take home with our wishes for hope and healing.

For those who were unable to attend, this year's AFSP video and videos from previous years are available online at AFSP.org: go to "Find Support," "I've Lost Someone," "International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day," "Documentaries."

We wish to thank Journey Mental Health for providing the space for this event, Jeanne and Peder Moren for the pies from Hubbard Ave. Diner, and Zarek O., the child that generously crafted and contributed the origami cranes for us.

A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



Steve & Debra Alles
in memory of Michael & DeWayne

Jan Asplund

Morgan Balint
in memory of niece Carmen

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in memory of son William John Bohne

John Carrier
in memory of son Rick

Pat Derer

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HOPES of Wisconsin, Inc.

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in memory of husband David

Linda Pederson
in memory of her husband

Marc Schnipper
in memory of brother Steven

Journey Mental Health Center for Sponsorship

Peder & Jeanne Moren
for Pies for Loss Day Conference

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

STRENGTH

In the early days of my grief,
a tear would well up in my eyes,
a lump would form in my throat,
but you would not know –
I would hide it,
And I am strong.

In the middle days of my grief,
I would look ahead and see that wall
that I had attempted to go around
as an ever-present reminder
of a wall yet unscaled.
Yet I did not attempt to scale it
for the strong will survive.
And I am strong.

In the later days of my grief,
I learned to climb over that wall
— step by step —
remembering, crying, grieving.
And the tears flowed steadily
as I painstakingly went over.
The way was long, but I did make it.
For I am strong.

Near the resolution of my grief,
a tear will well up in my eyes,
a lump will form in my throat,
but I will let that tear fall
and you will see it.
Through it you will see
that I still hurt and I care,
For I am strong.

— Terry Jogo, *The Compassionate Friends*, Regina, Canada

When we come closer to realizing that grief is temporary and healing is eternal, we will invest more willingly of ourselves in the work and time required.

— Jacquelyn Oliveira, *"The Park's Words for Life"*

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

Starting January 2020, we will meet at 49 Kessell Ct.

There is free parking in front of this building and elevator access to the second floor 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.

The experience of being in the physical presence of other survivors has, in itself, a therapeutic value which cannot be duplicated by any other method of resolving grief. A veteran survivor can instill a subtle message of hope with his or her very existence.

— Rev. Charles T. Rubey, M.S.W.

JANUARY						
		14				
		28				

FEBRUARY						
		11				
		25				

MARCH						
		10				
		24				

APRIL						
		14				
		28				

2020 MEETING DATES

May 12th & 26th

June 9th & 23rd

July 14th & 28th

Aug 11th & 25th

Sept 8th & 22nd

Oct 13th & 27th

Nov 10th & 24th

Dec 8th & 22nd

WILL WEATHER CAUSE A SOS SUPPORT GROUP CANCELLATION?

If weather is dangerous, 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 (608) 280-2580 or Emergency Services direct line (608) 280-2600.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Friday, March 6, Remembrance forms due

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

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- By phone message to (608) 280-2435
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