

TIPS FOR COPING WITH THE NEW YEAR



- Review the past year – the ups, downs, accomplishments, challenges and ‘gifts’. Consider new approaches if old ones aren’t working.
- Don’t compare your grief to that of others. Treat yourself with patience and kindness.
- Purchase a gift for yourself that your loved one might have bought for you.
- If you feel that friends and family are now less willing or able to support you, consider joining a

bereavement support group.

- Give yourself permission to not be your ‘usual self’ or to take ‘time off’. Allow yourself to do things differently – or not at all.
- Acknowledge that you are doing the best you can.
- Allow a place in your life for your grief. Amidst the activities and demands of everyday life, plan restorative time alone or with supportive others.

Victoriahospice.org

INSTEAD OF APOLOGIZING, I’M THANKING



As I’ve been grieving, I’ve noticed that I sometimes apologize for being open and honest about my grief. “Sorry I’m such a mess,” I might say after a crying jag in front of a friend. Or, “I’m sorry I need so much help.”

But I shouldn’t feel sorry about my normal and necessary grief. So now I’m switching out sorries for thank-yous: “Thank you for listening to me.” “Thank

you for helping me.” “Thank you for being there for me.”

These thank-yous honor my need to mourn and be supported in my grief. They also extend gratitude to my helpers. So much better!

Reflection: I don’t have to apologize for being genuine.

Source: 365 Days of Understanding Your Grief—Daily Readings for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart, by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.



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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 4, 2022** in order to be included.

TRIGGERS



Unexpected triggers can pop up day-to-day catching you off guard with your grief and bringing on a surge of emotions, whether it be walking down a supermarket aisle or seeing the first strawberries of the season. These small reminders throughout the day can bring up many different memories, emotions, thoughts and more. This reminds us that grief is not a stationary journey – it has constant ups and downs, and is an unpredictable path, sometimes with changes in emotion from hour to hour.

As time goes on there will inevitably be things which are happening in life which you want to share with your loved one who is no longer here, whether that be birthdays, Mother's day, Christmas, anniversaries, or just general every day situations, and this longing can trigger a flurry of powerful emotions. People cope with triggers in different ways, whether it be buying a card and writing down what they would want to say to their loved one, having something planned with family to celebrate them, or taking some time for themselves. There is no 'right' thing to do on a difficult day, but we do encourage you to do something that feels kind and nourishing for you.

There is no warning given when something is going to trigger a strong emotional reaction in you, because triggers can be unexpected or completely unknown. This can be very difficult to deal with, especially when you are just trying to survive your day. It may

be worth noting down when something has made you particularly emotional so that you can better learn what your specific triggers are – this can help normalize your experiences and help you look after yourself as best as you can.

Triggers can also come in the form of internal questions we find ourselves asking, such as: "Could I have done more?", "What if I had done something differently?", or, "What if we had spotted this sooner?" Being bereaved comes with a lot of questions, and hindsight is a helpful but sometimes tortuous thing. You may find yourself looking back and wondering if things were missed or what may have happened if things were done sooner. The trouble with the "What if?" question is that we may never have the answers and can therefore find ourselves going around and around in vicious circles.

A more helpful question to ask may be, "How can I look after myself in this moment?"

Is there a way you can look after yourself right now?

Best wishes,
Beth

"Each person's grief journey is as unique as a fingerprint or snowflake."

— Dr. Earl Grollman

COMFORT ZONE



Before the suicide, I did not have a clear idea what my comfort zone was. By that I mean how much noise, conversation, housecleaning, or driving I could endure before feeling overwhelmed. After the suicide, I found even a few simple everyday tasks made me feel unglued. Building a comfort zone and setting boundaries around how much I would allow myself to take in from my environment became an important component of my healing process. I had to make several modifications in order to cope. For a while I limited my time on the telephone and how much work I could do in a given day. I made a commitment to no

longer watch violent movies because I knew their ability to trigger memories of the suicide. For night-time reading in bed, I chose to read humorous books rather than dark murder mysteries. This helped me feel less overwhelmed and more comfortable. These changes do not have to last forever. But they can serve me well, just for today.

Today, I take heed of what causes me discomfort. I am learning my limits.

Reprinted from Healing the Hurt Spirit, Daily Affirmations for People Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide by Catherine Greenleaf

"What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year."

— Vern McLellan



CONSIDER THESE WORDS SHARED BY SURVIVORS THAT HAVE HELPED THEM ALONG THE WAY. WHAT WORDS HAVE HELPED YOU?

- Forgive yourself for not knowing. We only knew what we knew at the time.
- We did the best we could with what we knew at the time.
- Always have a Plan B for future events and plans. Perhaps even a plan C & D.
- Live the life that our loved one would wish for us.
- There will be bad days with good moments and good days with bad moments.
- Our loved one's pain was taken away.
- Don't need to meet all the needs of others when you are struggling to meet you own needs.
- Your "I need" statements can be helpful in clearly conveying your needs to others.

You are invited to submit thoughts or ideas concerning this Newsletter or the SOS program at any time.

* Would you perhaps review a book that you have read that would be of interest to survivors?

* Consider writing about your initial reactions after your loss compared with your feelings as time has passed.

* Write of your support group experience. What was your first visit like or share a longer-term involvement.

Contributed writings will be collected for possible publication with your permission. Writings could be credited to the author or anonymous. Please include contact information. Submit to: sos@journeymhc.org or by mail to JMHC/ Survivor Services, 25 Kessel Ct. Suite 105, Madison, WI 53711

INTERNATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS DAY WAS NOV. 20, 2021



This annual day of remembrance and education was held both virtually and in-person at various locations throughout the world. Our customary local event was once again not possible due to local Covid restrictions.

A Wisconsin statewide ZOOM was offered by AFSP

(American Foundation for Suicide Prevention) which included a video featuring longer term survivors, a facilitated discussion among the attendees, and an exercise in guided imagery specifically for survivors.

Past Survivor Day videos can be found at www.afsp.org/survivorday.

PODCASTS + MORE



reprinted from Friends for Survival Newsletter found at www.friendsforsurvival.org

Listen: Podcasts are another method to educate and entertain They are all sound and come in the form of series and then are broken down into episodes. There are millions of podcasts to choose from; here are a few to check out:

Grief Out Loud, A podcast by the Dougy Center
<https://www.dougy.org/news-media/podcasts>

What's Your Grief Podcast
<https://whatsyourgrief.com/grief-podcast/>

The Kindness Podcast – NPR
<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/557154160/the-kindness-podcast>

Ten Percent Happier Podcast with Don Harris
<https://www.tenpercent.com/podcast>

Watch:
TEDxTalk with David Pincus & Richard Knapp, authors of "Sons of Suicide: The Healing Power of Friendship."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ur97gIESDiE&t=121s>

Additionally, recommended reading lists for survivors can be found at www.afsp.org and www.suicidology.org

NANCY PIERCE RETIRES



Nancy Pierce recently retired from Journey Mental Health after 46 years of service.

Nancy's background and experience in social work, community mental health, crisis emergency response and dealing with traumatic events including suicide prevention and postvention prepared her to be the right person to form a Survivors Support Group in 1980. Backed by Bernie Cesnik, then Manager of the newly formed Crisis Unit of Dane County Mental Health, she worked in cooperation with the Dane County Coroner's office to reach out and provide services to those identified as having a suicide loss.

Over her tenure she provided trainings to Emergency Responders and countless others who

work in helping settings. Her personal responses to those who experienced trauma are countless. Her calm and expertise in these settings made her a "go to" person for those needing help in challenging situations.

We wish Nancy the best as she moves on to spend more time with her adult children and four grandchildren while pursuing activities she enjoys. She will continue to share her expertise by providing trainings and consultation in a more relaxed professional role while she continues to expand her skills. Survivors of Suicide Services is grateful for Nancy's enduring support and guidance that benefited so many of us who had suicide losses.

In Memorium: Bernie Cesnik

It is with sadness we report that Bernie Cesnik died on November 11, 2021 at age 81. The history of Bernie's association with community mental health services is deep. When Bernie was manager of the Crisis Unit at Dane County Mental Health he was a strong advocate for suicide loss survivors and instrumental starting an in-person support group where those with a suicide loss

could gather.

He and other professionals guided the outreach and growth of one of the earliest SOS groups in the country.

So many were helped by this gentle, compassionate man who was a leader, mentor, and a friend.

How fortunate we were to have him among us.

A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



Mary Agnes Kuehmichel

In memory of her brothers William Abramovich,
Paul Abramovich, Edward Abramovich

Caroline Foster

Judy Killian

Lynn & Jim Schultz

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

Please consider a donation in memory or honor of someone, a donation towards our quarterly Newsletter so that we might continue to bring it to you and others, or toward resources that are provided to new survivors.

Journey Mental Health for sponsorship

H.O.P.E.S. of Wisconsin Inc.

(Helping Others Prevent and Educate about Suicide)

Even though H.O.P.E.S. is no longer functioning as an organization, we are once again most grateful for continued generous financial support of JMHC and Survivors of Suicide.

"The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you're not going to stay where you are."

— J.P. Morgan

ONLINE (ZOOM) SURVIVOR SUPPORT GROUP CONTINUES FOR NOW

With no definite date set as to when in-person meetings might resume, we continue to offer **online group support**. We offer this option to survivors who would have normally desired to attend our in-person groups.

The following criteria are needed for participation.

- Be a survivor of a suicide loss and wish to interact with other survivors.
- Be over 18 years of age.
- Have technology available to use ZOOM either through computer, phone or another device.
- Be willing to register and speak with a Journey Mental health provider to be assured that a group experience would be appropriate and then receive an online invitation (Group entry codes).
- Be able to provide your email and phone contact information.

- Be aware that this is a discussion, support group and is **not** a “therapy” group.
- Be able to provide a quiet space, without interruptions when participating, insuring confidentiality of the group.
- Be available at the group starting time.
- Do not invite or include others who have not been specifically invited to the session.

All group discussions are led by a trained volunteer fellow survivor and supported by a Journey Mental Health professional.

Meetings, for now will be held on our regular meeting nights, the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The length of the meeting (usually 1½ hours) will be determined by the facilitator.

To request participation please email sos@journeymhc.org or call and leave a message for call back at SOS Confidential Voicemail (608) 280-2435.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE SUPPORT ZOOM MEETING 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 – 8:30 p.m.

For extra support please use Crisis Intervention 24/7 phone line at 608-280-2600 or leave a message at SOS voicemail 608-280-2435.

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL						
							8						8														
		11																			12						
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		25																			26						

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Friday, March 4, 2022 – Remembrances due for April Issue

CONNECTING WITH JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH

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

“Your present circumstances don’t determine where you can go.
They merely determine where you start.”

– Nido Qubein



SOS
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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.