



# NEWSLETTER

SPONSORED BY  
JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

April 2023, VOL. 29, ISSUE 2  
(608) 280-2435

## Remembrance Issue

### SPRING IS COMING



*By Evelyn Billings, TCF, Springfield, MA*

If you are newly bereaved and looking toward your “first” spring, you may be surprised by some of the feelings you may experience during the next few weeks. We hear so much about the beauty of spring- the new life and the feelings of renewal that are supposed to accompany this lovely time of year.

During my “first” year, I expected that spring would cheer me up and make me feel lots better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days, as life seemed to burst forth everywhere, I was “in the pits.” When a friend said to me, “Doesn’t a day like this really lift your spirits and make you feel better?” I had to reply honestly that I was having a really bad day – that the sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but

Survivors always stand in three places at once, our feet planted in the present with hearts still reflecting upon the past and those we’ve lost, as we cautiously listen to the call of the future moving forward one deep breath at a time.

—Author unknown

only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed. The coming of spring cannot make everything okay again. What it can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature’s process will continue and that can offer us hope. I welcome the sun’s warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the south, the forsythia, the daffodils and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don’t expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

*Reprinted from LIFELINK, Reno, Nevada, March 2009*



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## REMEMBERING OUR LOVED ONES

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Thank you to those who have shared your Remembrances for this issue. We respect the privacy and confidentiality of this information, so this section will not be included in the online version of the Newsletter. Requests can be made for a written copy of the Remembrance Issue by providing your name and complete mailing address by email to [sos@journeymhc.org](mailto:sos@journeymhc.org) or by phone (608) 280-2435 (confidential SOS Voicemail).

### Spring Thaws the Wounded Heart

The first spring came too soon. Why did daffodils show  
sunny faces around the gravestone?

Why did warm breezes blow clouds away? My world, a  
cold gray dismal had no room for this season.

Now years later, the blossoms of love, hope and healing  
have broken through the grounds of utter despair,  
warmed by memories of you. I join the daffodils,  
bringing my own smile.

— *Alice J. Wisler, reprinted from LARGO Newsletter*

## FROM SORROW TO REMEMBRANCE

Perhaps the most difficult transition anyone has to make after the death of a loved one is the journey from grief and sorrow to remembrance and honoring. Our loss seems to overwhelm us and, fearing we will dishonor the one we love by forgetting, we nurture grief, clinging to it with a desperation that comforts us.

But, in time, this grieving must give way to honoring and remembering. So often are the words “Get on with your life” spoken to the one who is left behind, alone.

To move on is not to forget. It is to remember. It is to remember all that your loved one gave you and all that you shared with your loved one. To move on is to celebrate those gifts and to know your loved one lives on in your memories. It is to realize how deeply he or she touched your life.

— From “Gentle Closings” by Ted Menten



“For some time, I could not believe that he had died. For an even longer time I was consumed with the pain of not only that he died, but how he died. Now I am beginning to remember that he lived.”

—A mother whose son died by suicide

## CONSIDER THIS: HOW CAN I SURVIVE?



by Jeanne Moren, Volunteer SOS Facilitator

As I meet new survivors soon after their losses or those who attend a Support Group meeting for the first time, there is a universal question that is asked. “How can I survive?” or “How did you survive?” The universal answer is an unspoken one as the very presence of those of us who have lived beyond a suicide loss demonstrates our survival. The question, however, seeks a more personal response of encouragement to someone who may be unable to see how “they” can survive within their particular circumstance.

We know that adults learn through their experiences or the experiences of others. This offers an opportunity to share some of what survivors, over time, have concluded.

### **We survive because we have to.**

- \* There are others who depend on us.
- \* We have additional assignments in life. Our life is not over even though it may feel fractured and unhinged.
- \* Life goes on and we do want to live despite our immediate despair.
- \* We did not make the decision for the deceased.

### **We survive because we learn to live “different.”**

- \* We adjust to living with a new “normal.”
- \* We conclude that we must integrate our past into facing and shaping the future.
- \* New experiences continue to create our life’s story.
- \* There can be an acceptance of joy and meaning as we heal and go forward.

### **We survive because we can.**

- \* We are able, often with help, to find those who can support us.
- \* We work to find resources and connections that guide us through the worst of times.
- \* There are strengths within us that are yet to be discovered, often to our own surprise.

Although each loss is unique, there is wisdom that can be passed on from survivor to survivor. I am thankful for those who demonstrated survival to me and thankful for those who continue to share their experiences and encourage others who are new to loss. The answers are not easy and hard work is required. Again, and again survivors demonstrate that they are up to the task and that they are willing guides for others.

We can and must make decisions for ourselves.

# A SINCERE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



**Darlene Abrahamson** in memory of her son Casey Gene Abrahamson

**Lorie Abrahamson-Hardy** in memory of her brother Casey Abrahamson

**Anonymous** in appreciation

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**John Carrier** in memory of his son Rick Robert Carrier

**Marsha Cohen & Mike Pressman** in memory of their nephew Eli Cohen

**Caroline Foster** in memory of her son James David Johnson and father George H. Jones

**Robin Gallagher** in memory of her brother Frank W. Kutz III and her grandson Isaiah Thomas Myers

**Barbara & David Gutweiler** in memory of their son Michael David Gutweiler

**Susan Hellenbrand** in memory of her father Mark Hellenbrand and her son Ryan Hellenbrand

**Julia Heusinger** in memory of her son Steven Joseph Heusinger

**Helen Kahl** in memory of her son Daniel Kahl

**Irene Kilcoyne**

**Judy Killian** in memory of her son Anthony (Tony) Killian

**Charles & Pat Kmet** in memory of their grandson Dustin Tarkenton

**Kathy Koenig** in memory of her son Zachary Koenig

**Marlin & Sharon Lehmann** in memory of their nephews Gary Ihm & Scott Ihm

**Sara Leikness** in memory of her son Daniel Duane Leikness

**Melissa Lipska**

**James & Sarah Macgillis** in memory of Peter Bussell

**Jonathan & Kathleen Marsh** in memory of their son Jonathan W. Marsh

**Dick & Donna Messerschmidt** in memory of their granddaughter Bobbi Manning

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**Mary Pautsch** in memory of her son Ryan Pautsch

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**Marc Schnipper** in memory of his brother Steven Schnipper

**Amy Schulz** in memory of her brother Rob Schulz

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**Rachel Thorson-Schmied** in memory of her son Erik J. Thorson

**Lynn & Rita Weingarten** in memory of their nephew Hayden Gustavson

**Mona Adams Winston** in memory of her son Jason Seaborn Winston

**Kathy Witt** in memory of her son Steven C. Larson

**Darlene Woldt** in memory of her son Derek Walsvick

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To make a tax deductible donation online by credit card, visit [www.journeymhc.org/donate](http://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.

\* A donation toward resources that are provided to new survivors.

## SEEKING COPIES OF “THE DIVIDING LINE”

This book written by Jeanne Moren (Adams) has been out of print for some time. It is no longer available. After being published in 2007 it was distributed at no charge to those requesting it.

If there are copies sitting on shelves no longer in use they could be passed on to those who are still requesting it. If you have a copy that is still being used or has been passed on, please keep it.

Copies can be returned several ways.

- Mail to Journey Mental Health Center, Attn SOS Suite 105, 25 Kessel Ct., Madison WI 53711. Mailing through “Media Mail” at the Post Office is less than \$4.

- Or clearly mark the package for SOS and drop off during business hours at Journey Mental Health Center Main Desk, 49 Kessel Ct., Madison WI 53711 or Journey Mental Health Emergency Services, 702 W. Main St., Madison WI 53715.

- If local, request arrangements for possible pick up: [sos@journeymhc.org](mailto:sos@journeymhc.org).

## 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](mailto:sos@journeymhc.org) or call and leave a message for call back at SOS Confidential Voicemail (608) 280-2435.

### SOS SUPPORT GROUP PURPOSE

*To share experiences for living and coping beyond suicide loss*

## 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.

APRIL						
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MAY						
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JUNE						
		13				
		27				

JULY						
		11				
		25				

## CONNECTING WITH JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH

**SOS Confidential Email:** [sos@journeymhc.org](mailto: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](http://www.journeymhc.org)

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



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