



Surviving After Suicide: Reaching Out To Help Others

SIoux FALLS STEP FORWARD TO PREVENT SUICIDE WALK & 5K *5 years of hope & healing*



Register now for the **5th Annual Step Forward to Prevent Suicide Walk & 5K** to be held in Sioux Falls on **Saturday, June 18th**. Step Forward to Prevent Suicide offers a 1.5 mile walk or 5K run followed by a remembrance ceremony. Join us at **Falls Park** with **check-in starting at 8:30am** and the **walk/race beginning at 9:00am**. This event helps raise awareness of suicide as a public health problem, remember those lost to suicide, and support the Helpline Center's suicide prevention and crisis support programs. ☺

**To Step Forward with us: Register online at www.helplinecenter.org
Call 211 within the Sioux Falls area. Call 605.339.4357 outside the Sioux Falls area. Or email events@helplinecenter.org**

Visit helplinecenter.org for more information on Suicide & Crisis Support Programs

HOPE & HEALING AFTER SUICIDE CONFERENCE

Thirty-seven suicide loss survivors gathered at Cedar Shore Resort near Oacoma, SD for the Hope & Healing After Suicide Conference on Saturday, April 30, 2016. Donna Schuurman, EdD, FT from the Dougy Center for Grieving Children & Families in Portland, Oregon, guided survivors as they explored several aspects of losing a loved one to suicide. One of those aspects was the importance of language surrounding suicide.



How we talk about suicide influences how we think about suicide and how we think about suicide influences how we talk about suicide. The word suicide, when used as a noun, reduces a person to the mode of their death. Sometimes we hear "He was a suicide." In contrast we would never say, "She was a heart attack." or "He was a stroke." When the method of one's death is used to describe the person who died, we lose the essence of that person, how they influenced our life, and their unique attributes.

In addition we often hear that someone "committed suicide." We use the term 'commit' when referring to crimes or sin. We don't use it when referring to other manners of death like cancer or a car accident. Using the terms 'died by suicide' or 'died of suicide' is honest and can open the conversation to the fact that psychological pain, physical pain, mental illness, or substance abuse can be contributing factors when someone dies by suicide. Often mood disorders or substance abuse is undiagnosed, untreated, or both.

Sometimes a loved one struggled for a long time before their death. They may have attempted suicide in the past. Language around suicide attempts also needs to be examined and changed. Using the term 'non-fatal attempt' or 'non-lethal attempt' is more accurate and honest than the antiquated term 'failed suicide attempt'. It is never a 'failure' to have our loved one still with us and still working at getting well. In addition, using the terms 'fatal attempt' or 'lethal attempt' is more accurate and honest than referring to a

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Join us for additional opportunities to
Step Foward to Prevent Suicide
at Walk & 5K Runs in
Pierre, SD - September 10, 2016
Watertown, SD - date to be determined





STEPPING FORWARD IN BROOKINGS

The third annual **Step Forward to Prevent Suicide Walk/5K Run** in **Brookings** was held on Saturday, April 16th. The SDSU Lost & Found campus organization partnered with the Helpline Center for this spring event. Over one hundred walkers and runners registered to participate with even more arriving to join us on the day of the event. Over forty percent of those in attendance self-identified as someone who had lost a friend or family member to suicide. For many of that number, this was their first time 'Stepping Forward' to prevent suicide with the Helpline Center and Lost & Found. We are honored you joined us!

After the walk/run participants came together for a remembrance ceremony in the SDSU Student Union. Jerry Cook, the walk/run spokesperson, shared his story of loss and healing. Jerry's dad died by suicide when Jerry was five years old. His message reminded us how important it is to take care of each other and ourselves. Music for the remembrance ceremony was provided by Pattie Berkner and Jenna Croymans. The Connor Noteboom family donated a Jasmine Acoustic Guitar that was raffled off with one hundred percent of the proceeds going to SDSU's Lost and Found organization.

Additional proceeds from the event support suicide prevention and crisis programs in Brookings and state-wide. ↻

5 years of hope & healing

2016 marks the 5th anniversary of the **Step Forward to Prevent Suicide Walk/5K Run**. Our t-shirt design for this year's walk/run speaks to the history of the event. Five footsteps growing in size represent the growth of the event. The footsteps are created from an infinity sign symbolizing the fact that lost loved ones will always be with us. The first Step Forward Walk/Run committee in 2012 was comprised of eight loss survivors and Helpline Center agency president, Janet Kittams-Lalley. They were hoping for 100 people and were surprised when over 500 participants came to raise awareness, show support for loss survivors, and raise funds for suicide prevention efforts.



Last year about 1000 participants came together for the same purposes raising more than \$50,000. Continuing the tradition, 100% of those funds remain at the Helpline Center providing funding for suicide prevention

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SUPPORT THE HELPLINE CENTER WHILE YOU SHOP

Shop AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is a simple, automatic way for you to support the Helpline Center every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the Helpline Center.

Just bookmark your browser to go to the Helpline Center's special link at:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7424387>

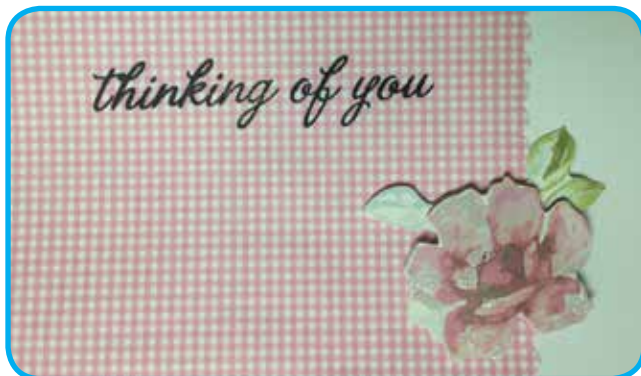
By shopping for gifts and everyday items with the Helpline Center's link, a portion of the sales will be donated back to the Helpline Center to support our mission. There's no cost to you as the shopper, so it's a win-win situation. By using your existing account on Amazon.com with AmazonSmile, your shopping cart, Wish List, registries, and other account settings are all still there for you. AmazonSmile is not available through mobile apps.

Go to <http://smile.amazon.com/about> for more specifics about this quick and convenient way to support the Helpline Center at no cost to you.

SENDING SUPPORT PACKETS STATE-WIDE

The Helpline Center provides encouragement, accurate information, and reliable resources to survivors of a loss to suicide by sending support packets across South Dakota.

Included in the support packet is a card, hand-made by a fellow survivor of suicide loss, to remind the recipient they are not alone on this grief journey. Photographs of card examples are included in this article.



Accurate information on suicide and healthy coping strategies for those bereaved due to a death by suicide are included. Recipients

will find tip sheets for helping others, yourself, and children who are affected by the loss. Many loss survivors tell us the booklet, SOS: A Handbook for Survivors of Suicide, included



in the packet was especially helpful for them early in their loss. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) is provided in every packet as a 24 hour a day - 7 days a week resource for anyone feeling hopeless or suicidal, anyone concerned about a loved one, or anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. In addition, trustworthy websites and a reading list are part of the packet.

Support packets are sent via postal mail at no charge to the recipient after the Helpline

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POSTVENTION IS PREVENTION

Most people are familiar with the concepts of suicide prevention and suicide intervention. Suicide prevention involves education efforts to stop suicide by teaching warning signs to the general public, decreasing stigma, and increasing help-seeking behaviors. Suicide intervention involves efforts to stop suicide by providing crisis support, intervention when imminent risk is present, and providing mental health care. The concept of suicide postvention is not as familiar. Suicide postvention involves efforts to stop suicide by the response after a suicide has occurred. Postvention includes efforts on both an individual and community level.

Postvention is important because family members of persons who die by suicide are at an increased risk of suicide themselves. Exposure to suicide may result in suicide clusters which are a higher-than-expected number of suicides occurring closely in time and space. Suicide contagion, when exposure to a death by suicide influences another at risk of suicide to take their life, can also occur. Research has shown inappropriate media responses contribute to increased suicide risk. Individually, postvention can be as simple as using non-stigmatizing language such as "died by suicide" or "lethal suicide attempt" instead of "committed suicide" or "successful suicide attempt." It includes sending messages of solutions and specific actions, such as inviting others to program the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number (1-800-273-8255) into their cell phone, when talking about a suicide that has occurred. Avoid language that portrays suicide as inevitable or an unsolvable problem.

On a community level agencies can provide postvention to those bereaved by suicide by educating staff on how to respond when a loss to suicide occurs. Funeral home directors, faith leaders, emergency department personnel, first responders, coroners, educators, and

clinicians all may have been in direct contact with someone who has died by suicide or a family affected by a death by suicide. Providing sensitive care to the surviving family and friends during this time has a long term impact on their healing. Additionally, agency personnel need appropriate care and support to process the loss themselves. Specific guidelines for media response are also available. After Robin Williams' death the media promotion of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline resulted in 200 more calls per day of help-seeking behavior for several months after his death.

All efforts to reduce risk and promote healing after a suicide death are efforts to prevent suicide. Comprehensive suicide prevention is a three-pronged approach consisting of prevention, intervention, and postvention. Please go to <http://www.sprc.org/directorsblog/postvention-prevention> and <http://suicidepreventionmessaging.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org> for additional information. ↻



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Sioux Empire United Way

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death as a 'successful attempt'. A death by suicide can never be considered a 'success' any more than we would consider a death by cancer a 'success'.

Changing the language we use changes the conversation. Changing the conversations we have changes thoughts. Changing thoughts decreases stigma. And decreased stigma facilitates help-seeking behavior, healing, and well-being. Language is a powerful tool everyone can use in the fight against suicide. ☞

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efforts and providing services for suicide loss survivors.

The remembrance ceremony, that has been part of the event from the beginning, is represented by the circles on the shirt symbolizing the traditional balloon release. In an effort to be environmentally friendly and avoid interference with airport safety, five dove-shaped balloons will comprise this year's balloon release. Reading the names of loved ones lost to suicide and a message of hope and healing by a loss survivor have also been tradition at the Step



Forward event. Carl Thompson, who lost his wife, Kathy, to suicide was the first walk spokesperson. Nancy Pavelko, whose dad, Edward Erickson, died by suicide in 2010, will share her message of hope and healing

Support Survivor Services

The Helpline Center is here all day, every day to help those at risk of suicide and those impacted by the loss of a loved one to suicide.

Please consider making a donation to the Helpline Center to support our services. Call 605-274-1418 or go to helplinecenter.org today.

at this year's event. Having Nancy as this year's spokesperson is especially meaningful as Nancy was a member of that original Step Forward Walk/5K Run committee 5 years ago. We invite you to join us on June 18, 2016 at Falls Park as we continue to **Step Forward** together **to Prevent Suicide**. Together we are stronger and together we make a difference. ☞

Sending Support - *continued from page 4*

Center receives the contact information of a loss survivor. The Helpline Center provides support packets to multiple people affected by the same loss because we know it is important to support all grieving family members and friends. If you or someone you know is grieving a loss to suicide, please contact the Helpline Center to request a support packet. Please make your request by calling 211 within the Sioux Falls area, calling 605.274.1416 outside the Sioux Falls area, or emailing twyla@helplinecenter.org ☞