



Surviving After Suicide: Reaching Out To Help Others

REMEMBER, CELEBRATE, HEAL

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is November 21, 2015

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is a day when people affected by suicide loss gather to remember those they have lost and help each other on the journey to healing. The Helpline Center in cooperation with the Sertoma Butterfly House & Marine Cove and author and speaker, DeeDee Raap, will be offering an opportunity to remember your loved one, celebrate the gifts of their life, and heal the wounds of loss. Join us and be surrounded by the healing sights and sounds of nature, release a butterfly in memory of your loved one, share treasured memories, and connect with other survivors. This family event will take place on Saturday, November 21, 2015 from 2:00pm to 5:30pm at the Sertoma Butterfly House & Marine Cove located at 4320 Oxbow Avenue in Sioux Falls, SD. A fifty percent discount on admission rates will apply for registered participants. ☞



Pre-registration is required as space is limited.

Please register by Wednesday, November 18th. For more information or to register: Call 211 within the Sioux Falls area. Call 605.274.1416 outside the Sioux Falls area. Or email twyla@helplinecenter.org



SAVE THE DATE - APRIL 30, 2016

Mark your calendar to join other survivors at a state-wide Survivors of Suicide Loss Conference in Chamberlain, South Dakota. Watch for more details in future issues of the Surviving After Suicide newsletter and the Helpline Center website.

CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS WITH A HEAVY HEART

Holidays can be difficult for anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one. The days can bring feelings of intense loneliness, loss, and grief instead of the family gatherings, joy, and light-hearted sharing remembered from former years. What can you do when society is encouraging you to join in the holiday spirit and your heart is heavy with the reminders of our loved one who is no longer here with you? How can you manage to hold both the joy of the season and the sadness of your loss? Here are some ideas that may help you make your way through the holiday season.

Respect the energy it takes to grieve. Be kind to yourself. Be tolerant of your physical limits. Set aside time to rest. The fatigue from grief and the fatigue from the busyness of the season can leave you overwhelmed. It is much more difficult to manage your emotions when your body is worn out. Be tolerant of your psychological limits. Eliminate unnecessary stress. Do what is right for you. Friends and family may have ideas of what they think would be helpful. Listen to yourself to know what you really need and then tell others who will listen to your needs and help you meet them.

Spend time with supportive, caring people. Grief was never meant to be carried alone. Surround yourself with those who can accept the expressions of both the grief from your loss and the joy of your cherished memories. Sometimes the grief and joy can all come flooding in at the same time. Find those in your life who will not judge you when you express all your emotions and who will be patient with you as you sort them out and name them. It is easier to learn to accept all the feelings, happy and sad, when you are surrounded by others who are committed to doing the same.



Plan ahead to reduce surprises. Grief has enough ups and downs and surprises of its own. Be proactive to minimize as many other

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SURVIVOR VOICES

Transform your story of suicide loss into a story of suicide prevention.

Survivor Voices training can help you learn how to speak about your loss and tell the story of your loved one's life and death to promote healing, increase knowledge and understanding about suicide, and support suicide prevention efforts. This two-day training helps survivors learn how to tell their story in a safe and effective manner within a supportive environment. Speak the truth about suicide. Help others learn how to prevent suicide and how to best support survivors of suicide loss. Sign up now for the next training to be held in Brookings, South Dakota on Monday, December 7th & Tuesday, December 8th. from 2:30pm to 8:00pm each day. A light meal will be provided. There is no fee to attend.

To register please contact Twyla at 605-274-1416 or twyla@helplinecenter.org

WINDING UP THE WALK SEASON...

Pierre and surrounding communities held their fourth annual Step Forward to Prevent Suicide Walk/Run on Saturday, September 12 with more than 650 people participating. South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley spoke identifying suicide as a public health issue. Pierre Police Officer Samson Boutchee, who lost his father to suicide when he was four-years-old, also addressed the crowd. Boutchee spoke of hope and help for suicide survivors reminding them they are not being judged and led a group cheer that encouraged survivors to shout "I am a survivor and my life matters". Remembrance activities included an honor bead ceremony that highlighted the variety of colored necklaces participants were wearing in memory of their children, their spouses, nieces or nephews or parents.



The names of loved ones who died by suicide were read during a balloon release. The remembrance ceremony concluded

with a musical performance by Sheltered Reality. The Helpline Center is grateful for this important partnership with the Avera St. Mary's Foundation.

Watertown held its first ever Step Forward to Prevent Suicide Walk/Run on Sunday, September 20 with over 100 people in attendance. The Helpline Center was pleased to partner with Glacial Lakes SAFE (Suicide Awareness For Everyone) to provide this opportunity for Watertown and surrounding communities to raise awareness about suicide as a public health issue and partner in suicide prevention. Dana Martens, who shared her story as a suicide loss survivor,

spoke of ending the stigma surrounding suicide by educating those around us about suicide and sharing the stories of loved ones who have been lost to suicide. She

encouraged all suicide loss survivors to reach out and accept the help and support available to them. Josh from KWAT, Stephanie Traversie, Dodi Haug, and Kelli Rumpza assisted and encouraged participants with their words and music. Bobbi Steidl provided photography services. The event concluded with a balloon release in memory of loved ones lost to suicide. ☞



...AND LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR

The **2016 Step Forward to Prevent Suicide Walk in Sioux Falls** will be held on June 18. It will mark the 5th year of the event. In recognition of this anniversary, the Helpline Center would like to create a quilt that stitches together the t-shirt designs from each year. We are looking for some quilting volunteers willing to take on this project. Please help us create a lasting work of art to remember all of the walks that have been held so far. If you can help or if you know of someone who has a talent for quilting, please contact Janet Kittams-Lalley at janet@helplinecenter.org ☞



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ups and downs and surprises as you can. You may see many people you haven't seen for some time at holiday gatherings. Naturally, they will ask you how you are doing. Prepare a simple, truthful answer. "I'm taking it one day at a time." "Some days are better than others." "I have lots of ups and downs right now." If they want to hear more and you want to say more, go ahead. If you don't want to say more, don't feel obligated. "I'd rather talk about something else right now." Your story belongs to you and you decide who hears it and how much of it they hear. In addition, plan a way to leave gracefully if a gathering gets to be too much. A simple statement to the host/hostess before the event stating you may need to leave early prevents misunderstandings. You don't need to give an explanation unless you would like to.

Plan ahead for family gatherings. This will help you anticipate activities. Grief from suicide commonly brings with it feelings of anxiety. Knowing what is going to happen to the best of your ability can help decrease that feeling of being caught off guard and



the panic and anxiety that comes with it. A family meeting before the holiday to decide what traditions you want to keep and what new ones you would like to begin may help to decrease anxiety for everyone in the family. If the meeting gets to be too much, take a break, do something that calms you, and come back to it when everyone is ready to

continue. Questions to begin the meeting might include: What did this holiday mean to the person who died? What do each of us need for support (hugs, privacy, time with friends) and who can we ask for help? How will we handle it if one person wants to do something and another person doesn't?



Talk about traditions. What traditions are connected to the person who died? Which new traditions would we like to create? (Explore this without worrying what others will think!) Here are some new traditions others have created after the loss of a loved one.

- *Light a memorial candle. Invite children and other friends/family to share memories.*
- *Write a card or letter to the person who died.*
- *Write memories on strips of paper and use them to create a paper chain. Use the paper chain as part of your holiday decorating.*
- *Hang a special decoration in memory of the person, such as a wreath or stocking. If a stocking is used, family members can place cards or pieces of paper with memories inside.*
- *Buy a gift the person would have liked and donate it to a charity.*
- *Giftwrap a box and make an opening in the top for family and friends to share written memories. At a special time the box can be unwrapped and the memories shared.*
- *Share one of the person's favorite foods or meals. Food can be a great spark for sharing memories.*

Talk about the details. Be thorough. Each family member had a different relationship



with the loved one who died, so each family member may have different memories or traditions that are meaningful to them. Respect the differences and acknowledge the depth of how your loved one's life touched and continues to touch your whole family. You may want to use a checklist to keep track of your decisions and identify those who can help make the ideas reality. Talk about:

- Food: What foods do you typically cook? Do you want to cook at home or go out?*
- Decorations: Do you want to decorate this year? What were the favorite decorations of the person who died? If you want to use them this year, how will you do that?*
- Events, parties, and family gatherings: Do you want to attend your usual parties this year? Do you want to host a gathering? How will you handle conversations about the person who*



died? How will you handle conversations with people who don't yet know about the death?



- Post-holidays: What have you traditionally done for New Year's Eve and Day? If you use busyness as coping strategy, how will you handle the post-holiday let down of January and February?*

Talk about how things went for each of you.

Set aside some time after the holiday to review how things went for each of you. Talk about what was difficult and what was helpful and healing. New traditions you tried this year may need to be tweaked or abandoned altogether if they didn't prove helpful and healing for your family. Grief changes over the years, so let your changing needs inform your decisions

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JOIN OTHER SURVIVORS TO FIND HOPE AND HEALING

Surviving After Suicide Class - This nine-week suicide bereavement class is for adults who have lost a loved one to suicide. The class is appropriate for both those whose loss is recent or those who have been struggling with their grief for a long time without support. It combines an educational aspect with the support needed to begin or continue the healing process. The next Surviving After Suicide class begins Tuesday, January 12, 2016. The class meets consecutive Tuesday evenings from 7pm to 8:30pm at the Helpline Center offices located in the Non-Profit Center at 1000 N. West Ave, Suite 310 in Sioux Falls. There is no charge for the class, but pre-registration is required.

Surviving After Suicide Support Group - This monthly grief support group is for adults who have lost a loved one to suicide. The group meets the first Thursday of each month from 7pm to 8:30pm at the Helpline Center offices located in the Non-Profit Center at 1000 N. West Ave, Suite 310 in Sioux Falls. There is no charge for the group and registration is not required. ☞

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of how you keep the season. It is important family members know ahead of time there will be a chance to discuss what worked, what didn't, and what you want to do differently next year. It relieves anxiety to know one is not locked into something that makes the holiday season harder than it needs to be.



The holidays are all about love. They are about memories made in love. They are about celebrating the gift of giving and receiving love. Grief and mourning have everything to do with love as well. They come as a result

of having been loved by and loving the special someone you are missing this holiday season. Keep love in your holiday this year. Love and be patient with yourself. Surround yourself with loving, caring people. Experience the breadth and depth of love in all its forms this holiday season. ☞

The Dougy Center. (n.d.). Getting through the holidays from the dougy center. Retrieved from http://www.dougy.org/docs/TDC_Holiday_Tip_Sheet_Worksheet_10_14.pdf

Wolfelt, A. D. (2005). *Healing your holiday grief: 100 practical ideas for blending mourning and celebration during the holiday season*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press.

Wolfelt, A. D. (2011). Helping yourself heal during the holiday season. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforloss.com/2011/11/helping-heal-holiday-season>

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



www.helplinecenter.org
help@helplinecenter.org

1000 N. West Ave. Ste. 310
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Admin: 605-334-6646
Fax: 605-332-1333



Sioux Empire United Way

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.