

I did the best I could
at the time
and when I knew better,
I did better.
Maya Angelou

The Survivors of Suicide program and this newsletter depend in part on donations from the survivor community. We offer our sincere appreciation for recent donations in memory of Jimmy/James, Jason O, Anthony K, Fred M, Daryl G, and Dwayne W.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

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Macomb Crisis Center

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Macomb County Crisis Center Presents: 8th Annual Survivors of Suicide Conference

Good Mourning

A one day conference for those who have lost a loved one to suicide and those who care for them

Saturday, April 13, 2013

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

(registration begins at 10:30 am)

Conference Highlights:

Professional speakers

Survivors panel

Special drumming performance

Art room available all day

Write a message on the conference quilt

Walk through a healing labyrinth

Location: Macomb Intermediate School District

44001 Garfield Road

Clinton Township, MI 48038

Call Now! Registration deadline: April 1, 2013

To register, or for further information, please

call 586-948-6103 or

e-mail jeni.koviak@mccmh.net

Lunch is provided. Donations accepted.

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

March/April 2013

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

Two Patterns of Grieving

Is there only one way to cope with traumatic loss? Many authors and therapists assert that one must outwardly show intense feelings or seek help for private, painful feelings if one is to grieve properly. These behaviors mark what may be described as a "feminine" pattern of grief.

However, some individuals respond quite differently to loss through death. While this second pattern is often thought of as "masculine" grief, it is a pattern also experienced by many females (just as "feminine" grieving patterns are experienced by many males).

Masculine grievers' initial responses to grief are often of a cognitive nature – thinking rather than feeling. They may first contemplate the implications of their loss, before encountering the pain of separation. For example, a psychologist and his wife each lost both of their

parents within an eight-month period. While his wife described her grief as a "rollercoaster ride" of intense feelings, the husband sought to understand what it meant to be an orphan: "Do you realize that I'm the last male alive in my family; that when I die our family name dies too?"

The most common emotional responses for masculine grievers are anger, guilt, and a sense of failure or regret. Some people resent being encouraged to express their emotions aloud, viewing solitude and self-reliance as virtues. One man explained, "I knew I could hide my feelings very well. I had learned that and counted it as a strength...There were times when I was very close to that fearful state of being out of control of my emotions. But I was spared that indignity."

When masculine grievers do express deep emotions, it is likely to happen in the first few

days after the death, and in the presence of men who are also grieving. When masculine grievers respond behaviorally to a loss, the behavior is less likely to involve tears and more likely to involve action and problem-solving. Sometimes they immerse themselves in work. Other times they adopt an activity that is intimately related to the loss, such as taking legal action or creating a memorial. They may find solace in athletic activities.

Masculine grievers feel the agony of loss just as surely as do feminine grievers. There are advantages and strengths in expressing emotions and seeking help, but there are complementary strengths in seeking resolution in cognitive and active approaches.

*excerpts from
Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D.
Living with Grief after Sudden Loss
Taylor and Francis (1996)*

HEART LINES

A New Day

A new day
A new start
Another way
Another moment to my heart
Life and its ups and downs
Will never hurt my ways
Of making you another day happier
So life will go on
For better and for worse
But I will always be
Another day
Another moment
Closer to your heart
With the love from my heart to yours

Melissa

Sharing the Journey

A Survivor's Initial Needs

by Sally Spencer-Thomas, Psy.D.

After decades of coming to the aid of the recently bereaved, Frank Campbell has a few ideas about what people need in the immediate aftermath of a suicide.

"What they need is TLC," he told me. "They need water and peppermint, so they can swallow. And they need the freedom to talk about all the things they can."

That was certainly my experience in the first couple of weeks after the death of my brother to suicide. Many friends listened to me tell the same stories over and over again, patiently, without flinching. Shelley brought me a basket of self-care goods. Jerene brought a vat of chicken soup to my parents' house. That was all we were able to choke down for days, and it sustained us. And then there was Tom, my boss's boss. After Carson's memorial service was over, Tom made his way to me. Without saying a word, he cupped my face wrought with grief and despair in both of his hands and looked compassionately into my eyes. I felt immense support and reassurance in that moment, and am forever grateful for his tender kindness.

In the days following Carson's death, I found myself consumed with concrete tasks, like publishing my brother's obituary and getting his pictures blown up for his memorial service. I counted on the practical assistance of neighbors and friends to help make sure the kids were fed and got to where they needed to go. Phone calls, letters, and emails swarmed in and became very difficult to track – again, friends and neighbors pitched in.

What I needed, but didn't have, was a driver, because I was not safe behind the wheel. Carson's memorial service was just six days after his death, and because our family had moved to Colorado from Connecticut only a few years before, most of the people attending his service were arriving by airplane. I remember driving out to the airport to pick up some friends, and all of a sudden I looked

up and felt a wave of panic. I had no idea where I was or where I was going. I was certain that the risks of getting hit by another car were great and that something grave was going to happen to my children. This dissociative and panicked state was common, as my mind could not stop ruminating over what had happened. I was a million miles away from where I was currently driving.

These simple, practical aspects of support - driving, feeding, organizing - are critical in the immediate aftermath of suicide. Those trying to support the bereaved should know that it is okay for them to take the lead, because often those in crisis are very confused about what might be helpful. Just saying "Call me if you need anything" probably won't do the trick.

It may help to ask permission to intervene where a need is apparent: "I see that you are not eating. I would like to bring you over some soup. Would that be okay?" Or, "I've noticed that your mail is stacking up. Would you like me to help organize it for you?"

National Council Magazine
www.TheNationalCouncil.org
2012, issue 2

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

(1st Wednesday and 3rd Tuesday of each month)

Wednesday, March 6

Tuesday, March 19

Wednesday, April 3

Tuesday, April 16

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

We are moving!

**Please see Upcoming Events
for new meeting locations!**

**Questions? Call 586-307-9100
or listen to the message at 586-948-6103**

We are Moving!

**The Survivors of Suicide program
no longer meets at Fox Pointe Center,
46360 Gratiot, in Chesterfield Township.**

**Until further notice,
all SOS activities will take place at
the Macomb Intermediate School District.***
Please bear with us as we work to secure
a new permanent location.

March 2013

SOS Craft Nite

Monday, March 25, 6pm-9pm

April 2013

Annual Survivors of Suicide Conference

Saturday, April 13

11am-3pm

please call 586-948-6103 to sign up

Spring 6-Week Workshop

Wednesday, April 3

Wednesday, April 10

Wednesday, April 17

Wednesday, April 24

Tuesday, April 30

Wednesday, May 8

6:30pm-8:30pm

please plan to attend all six meetings;

call 586-948-6103 to sign up

SOS Craft Nite

Monday, April 29, 6pm-9pm

***Macomb Intermediate School District**

44001 Garfield Road (south of Hall Road)

Clinton Township, MI 48038

Check monitor at entrance

for room number.

*Call 586-948-6103 to listen to a
message with updated information
on meeting rooms.*