

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

A NATIONAL OUTREACH & SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY A SUICIDE DEATH

2019
APRIL



YOU KNOW YOU ARE RECOVERING WHEN...

- * You can laugh and enjoy being with others.
- * Taking care of yourself is not only ok, but it feels good.
- * The future is not so frightening.
- * You can handle "special days" without falling apart.
- * You want to reach out to others in need or pain.
- * You now enjoy activities that you had given up after the death of your loved one.
- * You can share humorous memories without crying.
- * Your emotional roller coaster is slowing down.
- * You can actually see your progress.
- * You skip or forget a ritual such as visiting the cemetery, and there is no guilt.

Do not be alarmed if one day you suddenly feel the pangs of grief again and believe that you are slipping back into the valley of grief. These moments will come when you least expect, but you will be able to handle the situation without panic.

Since the death of your loved one, your life will never be what it was and that is reality.

Life has taken a different direction and you will never forget your loss, but the pain is bearable, and at times touching the tender memories will not elicit pain at all.

Source: SOS of Dane County, Madison, WI

April: We marked our 36th anniversary on February 19th. Our outreach to support and educate continues: we recently spoke with the Peer Support Team at the Dept. of Corrections (Folsom). We also shared at a staff meeting of 25 outreach workers who work with persons needing mental health services. The third group we met with were chaplains at a local church.

We are so very encouraged by your support and notes. This confirms that our efforts to reach out to each of you with our monthly newsletter are appreciated, and inspires us to continue our work of providing help and hope.

*Gratefully, Marilyn Koenig,
Executive Director*



SUPPORT RESOURCES

Friends for Survival
www.friendsforsurvival.org

Phone: (916) 392-0664

Toll Free: (800) 646-7322

If you are in crisis and need immediate help, call the 24 hour National Crisis Line:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Alliance of Hope
Survivor services including a 24/7 on-line community forum
www.allianceofhope.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
Extensive lists of available meeting support www.afsp.org/find-support

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)
www.suicidology.org

New York Life Foundation
Bereavement resources:
www.newyorklife.com/foundation/bereavement

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
For service members, veterans, and their families: www.taps.org

The Compassionate Friends
For bereaved parents of a deceased child: www.compassionatefriends.org

The National Center for Grieving Children & Families
The Dougy Center
www.dougy.org/grief-resources



This program is funded in part by the Division of Behavioral Health Services through the voter approved Proposition 63, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

letter to a friend

by Margaret Brownley

Dear Friend,

Please be patient with me. I need to grieve in my own way and in my own time. Please don't take away my grief or try to fix my pain. The best thing you can do is listen to me and let me cry on your shoulder. Don't be afraid to cry with me. Your tears will tell me how much you care.



Please forgive me if I seem insensitive to your problem. I feel depleted and drained, like an empty vessel, with nothing left to give. Please let me express my feelings and talk about my memories. Feel free to share your own stories of my loved one with me. I need to hear them.

Please understand why I must turn a deaf ear to criticism or tired clichés. I can't handle another person telling me that time heals all wounds. Please don't try to find the right words to say to me; there is nothing you can say to take away the hurt. What I need are hugs, not words.

Please don't push me to do things I'm not ready to do, or feel hurt if I seem withdrawn. This is a necessary part of my recovery. Please don't stop calling me. You might think you're respecting my privacy, but to me it feels like abandonment.

Please don't expect me to be the same as I was before. I've been through a traumatic experience and I'm a different person. Please accept me for who I am today.

In return for your loving support I promise that, after I've worked through my grief, I will be a more loving, caring, sensitive and compassionate friend – because I have learned from the best.

Love,

Me

Source: *Survivors of Suicide Newsletter*, Crisis Intervention Center, Nashville, TN

choosing helpful friends

by Henri Nouwen, Catholic priest/theologian, writer, academic

WHEN WE HONESTLY ASK OURSELVES WHICH PERSONS IN OUR LIVES MEAN THE MOST TO US, WE OFTEN FIND IT IS THOSE WHO INSTEAD OF GIVING ADVICE, CURES, OR SOLUTIONS, HAVE CHOSEN RATHER TO SHARE OUR PAIN AND TOUCH OUR WOUNDS WITH A WARM AND TENDER HAND.

THE FRIEND WHO CAN BE SILENT WITH US IN A MOMENT OF DESPAIR AND CONFUSION; WHO CAN STAY WITH US IN AN HOUR OF GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT; WHO CAN TOLERATE NOT KNOWING, NOT CURING, NOT HEALING AND FACE WITH US THE REALITY OF OUR POWERLESSNESS - THAT IS A FRIEND WHO CARES.

Source: *The Compassionate Friends of Los Angeles*



Spring

By Darcy Sims

SPRING BEGINS WITH A REMEMBERED JOY, A CHERISHED MOMENT WHEN WE ALLOW A SPARK OF HAPPINESS TO PERMEATE THE GLOOM.

SOURCE: LIFELINK, SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS, RENO, NV





on dealing with a violent death

by Father Ken Czillinger

1. Generally, it takes 18 to 24 months just to stabilize after the death of a family member. It can take much longer when the death was a violent one. Recognize the length of the mourning process. Beware of developing unrealistic expectations of yourself.
2. Your worst times usually are not at the moment a tragic event takes place. Then you're in a state of shock or numbness. Often you slide "into the pits" four to seven months after the event. Strangely, when you're in the pits and tempted to despair, may be the time when most people expect you to be over your loss.
3. When people ask you how you're doing, don't always say, "Fine." Let some people know how terrible you feel.
4. Talking with a true friend or with others who've been there and survived can be very helpful. Those who've been there speak your language. Only they can really say, "I know; I understand." You are not alone.
5. Often depression is a cover for anger. Learn to uncork your bottle and find appropriate ways to release your bottled-up anger. What you're going through seems unfair and unjust.
6. Take time to lament, to experience being a victim. It may be necessary to spend some time feeling sorry for yourself. "Pity parties" sometimes are necessary and can be therapeutic.
7. It's all right to cry, to question, to be weak. Beware of allowing yourself to be "put on a pedestal" by others who tell you what an inspiration you are because of your strength and your ability to cope so well. If they only knew!
8. Remember you may be a rookie at the experience you're going through. This is probably the first violent death you've coped with. You're new at this, and you don't know what to do or how to act. You need help.
9. Reach out and try to help others in some small ways at least. This little step forward may help prevent you from dwelling on yourself.
10. Many times of crisis ultimately can become times of opportunity. Mysteriously your faith in yourself, in others, in God can be deepened through crisis. Seek out persons who can serve as symbols of hope to you.

Source: *Heartbeat/Survivors After Suicide*, Grand Junction, CO

Grief

by Gwen Flowers

**I had my own notion of grief.
I thought it was the sad time
That followed the death of
someone you love.
And you had to push through it
To get to the other side.
But I'm learning there is no
other side.
There is no pushing through.
But rather,
There is absorption.
Adjustment.
Acceptance.
And grief is not something you
complete,
But rather, you endure.
Grief is not a task to finish
And move on.
But an element of yourself—
An alteration of your being.
A new way of seeing.
A new definition of self.**

BIG DAY OF GIVING

By: Marilyn Koenig

The Sacramento Region Community Foundation's Big Day of Giving is an annual 24-hr giving challenge to help over 600 local nonprofits raise funds to make a difference in the Sacramento region. It's the culmination of an entire year's worth of community-building and collaboration, made possible by donors like you and community partners, like Western Health Advantage.

In six years, caring people in our community have raised over \$30 million for nearly 600 organizations on Big Day of Giving. Last year, our region's annual giving day generated \$7.4 million.

We are excited to be one of the 600 non-profits selected this year to participate—and, with your support during Big Day of Giving on May 2, we will grow our impact in this community.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

DONATE: On Thursday, May 2nd, you can donate to Friends for Survival by visiting www.bigdayofgiving.org and making a gift with a credit or debit card. Donations as little as \$15 make a big difference, and your gifts can help us win some of the \$100,000 in prizes that are up for grabs! (If you'd like, starting Monday, April 15, you can schedule your gift in advance of Big Day of Giving, just so you don't forget!)

CREATE: Rally your networks to give during Big Day of Giving with a fundraising campaign! Starting April 8, click the "Create a Campaign" button on Friends for Survival's profile at www.bigdayofgiving.org and build a personal campaign to encourage your friends to give, too. Share the link with your friends and family, so their gifts contribute to your campaign!

SHARE: Let your networks know that you support our cause by sharing our posts on your social media accounts, or by creating and sharing a fundraising campaign. A good word from a donor like you is the most meaningful way for us to spread our mission!

N. CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUPS

Our meetings are peer support, not therapy sessions. They are free and you are invited to attend for as long as you need. All locations are drop-in meetings, no RSVP required.

Please call our office for specific meeting locations: 916-392-0664 or 1-800-646-7322

Carmichael (Sacto)

Tuesday, 4/16 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Cameron Park

Tuesday, 4/9 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Chico

Monday, 4/8 @ 4:30pm – 6pm

Elk Grove

Wednesday, 4/10 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Modesto

Monday, 4/15 @ 7pm – 8:30pm

Roseville/Rocklin

Thursday, 4/18 @ 7pm – 8:30 pm

Yuba City

Tuesday, 4/23 @ 6:30pm – 8pm

