

The best thing
about the future
is that it comes
only one day at a time.
Abraham Lincoln

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: Michael W., Michael K., Jordan D., William M., Scott, Jeff N., and Danny B.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

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Macomb Crisis Center

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Coming in August **MEMORY STONE WORKSHOP**

The Macomb County Survivors of Suicide group is hosting its 11th Annual Memory Stone Workshop on August 17, 2011 at 6:30 pm. *(In case of inclement weather, the event will be held on Monday, August 22, instead.)*

This event is for the whole family! We will provide the cement and the molds for the stones, as well as some decorative materials for you to use. If you have photos or any other special objects you wish to add to your stone, please bring them with you.

The stone choices for this year will be: heart, butterfly, flower, circle, square, fish, octagon, or bricks. Smaller versions of some of these styles will also be available. Please note that we are unable to reserve the molds, so you may or may not be able to use your first choice of mold.

Please call the Crisis Center at 586-307-9100 to register. If you are bringing a group with you, please let us know how many of you will be coming, and how many stones your group plans to create.

Memory Stone Workshop
Wednesday, August 17, 2011
6:30 pm

*in case of inclement weather, event will be
held Monday, August 22 at 6:30 pm*

Fox Pointe Center
46360 Gratiot (south of 21 Mile)
Chesterfield



The Crisis Center is a program of Macomb County Community Mental Health. MCCMH programs and services are supported and funded, in part, by the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners, and are administered by the Macomb County Community Mental Health Board. MCCMH is a CARF Accredited organization.

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

July/August 2011

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

Fear, Anxiety and Panic

When you are grieving, you may experience certain anxieties and fears that are troubling, but normal as well.

Having any kind of awful and terrible thoughts is a symptom of anxiety. After a loss to suicide, it is not unusual to think about your own death (even death by suicide). If you have occasional sudden, awful, and frightening thoughts of suicide, they are probably symptoms of your anxiety, and are normal. If they persist over a long period, and involve specific plans for death, you need to run, not walk, to your doctor.

Another very common fear is that someone else you love will die, and what will you do then? Be assured it is normal to have this panicky fear. With time it will gradually go away with your other fears.

Another thing that is fairly common in the aftermath of suicide is a panic attack, where

an individual is suddenly, usually without provocation, filled with waves of fear that last for a minute or two - but seem like hours. The panic feeling itself is frightening - and the fear of the panic returning causes further anxiety.

Symptoms of a panic attack are likely caused by adrenaline in the bloodstream. Here are some helpful things to know about how your body experiences adrenaline: your heart beats faster, sometimes skipping beats, and booming in your chest; you break out in a sweat on your forehead and hands; your skin may feel tingly; you may feel as if a tight band is around your head; your muscles knot up; your stomach muscles contract; your eyes see bright sparks; you feel dizzy; everything may go dark, and you fear passing out; you feel nauseated.

If you experience a panic attack, see a doctor. Once reassured that your symptoms

are anxiety-related, you can know that the physiological effects of adrenaline are scary but are not harmful. Try reassuring yourself, "It's just adrenaline. It always goes away." Take deep breaths, and move your body to dissipate the adrenaline. It is a fact that there is a maximum amount of effect adrenaline can have on our bodies. Consequently, the panic attack you have already experienced is probably the worst it will ever get.

Fear is fed on anticipation so the best prescription for fear and panic is to stay in the present. Rather than asking yourself "what if" questions, ask yourself "Am I all right now?" Focus on your surroundings and on your breathing. If the anxiety feels too much to handle on your own, please do see a doctor or counselor.

*Adina Wroblewski
Suicide: Survivors
SAVE (1994)*

HEART LINES

The Grace of Emilia

In your presence, I feel hope.
The energy that emanates from you
Lightens and enlivens my soul.
A feeling of joy, long dormant,
breaks through.
Watching your spirit
As it learns to inhabit your tiny body
Is beautiful to witness.
It reminds me that life is temporal;
A process with a beginning -
and an end.
Yet, existence is eternal.

M.D. 12-25-10

Sharing the Journey

Story's End

Meghan O'Rourke

My mother died on Christmas Day, at home, around three in the afternoon. In the first months afterward, I felt an intense desire to write down the story of her death, to tell it over and over to friends. I jotted down stray thoughts and memories in the middle of the night. Even during her last weeks, I found myself squirreling away her words, all her distinctive expressions: "I love you to death" and "Is that *our* wind I hear?"

If I told the story of her death, I might understand it better, make sense of it - perhaps even change it. What had happened still seemed implausible. A person was present your entire life, and then one day she disappeared and never came back. She had been diagnosed with cancer; I had known for months that she was going to die. But her death nonetheless seemed like the wrong outcome - an instant that could have gone differently, a story that could have unfolded otherwise. If I could find the right turning point in the narrative, then maybe, like Orpheus, I could bring the one I sought back from the dead. *Aha: Here she is, walking behind me.*

It was my mother who had long ago planted in me the habit of writing things down in order to understand them. When I was five, she gave me a red corduroy-covered notebook for Christmas. I sat in my floral nightgown turning the blank pages, puzzled. "What do I do with it?" I wanted to know.

"Well, you'd write something like 'Today I saw a woman with purple hair crossing Montague Street.'"

I still remember the way she said that sentence: *Today I saw a woman with purple hair crossing Montague Street.* It is one of those memories that I carry around, and always will, like the shard of a shell that falls out of a bag you took to the beach for a long summer.

I read poems, and she asked me about poetry. "I don't really understand it," she said. "I never have. Do you think you could teach me to read a poem?" I said that I could.

In her last weeks, I would sit next to her, rubbing her feet, watching her gaze out the window - she looked past us, like an X-ray machine. Already left behind, I wanted to call out, like Orpheus, "Come back! Come back!"

Yet the story of Orpheus, it occurs to me, is not just about the desire of the living to resuscitate the dead but about the ways in which the dead drag us along into their shadowy realm because we cannot let them go. So we follow them into the Underworld,

descending, descending, until one day we turn and make our way back.

Now and then, you think you discern glimpses of that other life. Running along a quiet road four months after her death, I thought I felt my mother next to me, just to the side. I turned, and saw nothing except a brown bird with a gray ruff and strangely tufted feathers. I did not know its name. She would have.

The poem I would have taught her how to read was Robert Frost's "The Silken Tent," one long sentence strewn across fourteen lines, like an exhale, or a breeze. It compares a woman to a tent swaying in the wind, a tent that "is loosely bound/By countless silken ties of love and thought/To every thing on earth the compass round."

I thought of that poem one wintry night nearly a year after her death. Walking through the West Village, I saw on a sidewalk bookseller's table a cheap paperback copy of a novel my mom had given me when I was a teenager - a novel that, she told me, had meant a lot to her. I bought it and read it that night, feeling that I was learning something new about both myself and her, since she had loved that novel, with its story of a young Irish-Catholic woman struggling to understand herself. I would always look for clues to her in books and poems, I realized. I would always search for the echoes of the lost person, the scraps of words and breath, the silken ties that say, Look: she existed.

*Excerpt from The New Yorker
March 7, 2011*

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

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

Wednesday, July 6

Tuesday, July 19

Wednesday, August 3

Tuesday, August 16

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Fox Pointe Center, 46360 Gratiot
South of 21 Mile Road
Enter door at rear of building
Questions? Call 586-307-9100

Upcoming Events

June 2011

Balloon and Butterfly Release

Wednesday, June 29

6:30pm

Craft Nite, Monday, June 27, 6pm-9pm

July 2011

Craft Nite, Monday, July 25, 6pm-9pm

August 2011

Memory Stone Workshop

Wednesday, August 17

(*inclement weather date: Monday, 8/22/11*)

6:30pm

Craft Nite, Monday, August 29, 6pm-9pm

September 2011

Craft Nite, Monday, September 26, 6pm-9pm

October 2011

Craft Nite, Monday, October 24, 6pm-9pm

November 2011

Craft Nite, Monday, November 28, 6pm-9pm

December 2011

Holiday Program

*All activities take place at Fox Pointe Center,
46360 Gratiot, unless otherwise noted.*

*Please watch future newsletters for additional
information as it becomes available. Events
are subject to change.*