

The act of living
is different all through.
Her absence
is like the sky,
spread all over everything.

C.S. Lewis

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:
Jeff N.
Roger K.
Jennifer J.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

is published bi-monthly by the
Macomb Crisis Center

Gary Burnett, MA, LPC, LMSW
Agency Supervisor

Jean Larch, RSST
S.O.S. Program Coordinator

Ellen Paré, BA, LBSW
Editor

(586) 307-9100

You are invited to join us for a

Five Week Educational Workshop "Understanding Suicide"

Understanding Suicide is a special workshop designed to help survivors heal the intense emotional pain and confusion that often follows in the aftermath of suicide. Participants will learn about the complexities of suicide and its grief, and will have the opportunity to share their experiences with others who have lost a loved one to suicide.

Workshop Topics Include:

- The Stages of Grief
- The Suicidal Mind
- The Search for Explanations
- The Suicidal Personality
- Healing After Suicide

This workshop consists of five consecutive weekly classes. Participants are asked to register and to attend all five sessions.

**When: Wednesdays
May 4, 11, 18, 25, June 1
6:30 - 8:30pm**

**Where: Macomb Intermediate School District
44001 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038**

There is no charge for this workshop. Donations are appreciated.

Space is limited! To register please call the Macomb County Crisis Center at 586-307-9100 (24 hour number).



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.

May/June 2011

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

Memory Embraces

"I was just sailing along feeling pretty good, when out of nowhere came this overwhelming feeling of grief." This comment often reflects what is commonly called a "grief attack." Another term I use for this experience is a "memory embrace." A grief attack or memory embrace is a period of time when you may have intense anxiety and sharp pain.

You may think that long periods of deep depression are the most common part of grief and mourning. Actually, you may more frequently encounter acute and episodic "pangs" or "spasms" of grief. That's why they are called grief attacks. They sometimes "attack" you out of nowhere.

You may feel an overwhelming sense of missing the person you loved and

find yourself openly crying, or perhaps even sobbing. As one woman reflected, "I'll be busy for awhile, and sometimes even forget he has died. Then I'll see his picture or think of his favorite food, and I'll just feel like I can't even move."

Your "pangs" of grief also may occur in response to special occasions that bring about reminders of the painful absence of someone in your life. Certain times may have special meaning for you or your family, and the person who died is more deeply missed at those times.

Interestingly, your internal clock can alert you to an anniversary date you may have forgotten. If you notice you are feeling down or experiencing "pangs" of grief, you may be having an anniversary response.

Keep in mind that grief attacks are normal. When and if one strikes you, be compassionate with yourself. You have every right to miss the person who has died and to feel temporary paralysis. Don't try to deny a grief attack when you experience it. It is probably more powerful than you are.

I like to think of grief attacks as a reflection of how those we love are determined not to be forgotten. Although the pain of a grief attack hurts so deeply, embrace it, and remind yourself that these reactions are natural.

*Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.
Understanding Grief:
Helping Yourself Heal
Accelerated Development
(1992)*

HEART LINES

Tinted Windows

I've tried to get on with my life,
patching together
the remnants of myself
that survived your explosive
exit from this world.

The pain is still there;
it will always be there.
But I've boxed it up
and pushed it away
to the back of my mind,
where I force it to stay.

But every so often,
it refuses to be ignored,
escaping the confines
of the box,
and hitting me full force
when I least expect it.

And I am always shocked
by the intensity of the pain,
as though my heart
has not been assaulted
this way
a million times before.

And that is why
I drive home
some afternoons
with tears
streaming down my face,
staring straight ahead
as I hold the pain
of your loss
close to my heart,
and thank God
for tinted windows.

Denise Zelenak Bullock (9-18-00)

Sharing the Journey

The Squirrel and the Fox

Richard Morsilli

I lost my son Todd when he was thirteen. He was a wonderful boy. He had a knack for making people feel good about themselves. The day before he died, I heard him say to my wife Carole, "Hey, Mom, my friends think you're pretty."

Todd was a tennis player. I was the one who had visions of Wimbledon. All Todd ever said was, "That's a long way off, Dad. A lot can happen." Did he sense what was coming, like the garden that blooms like crazy just before frost?

Last February, Todd went for a walk with his cousin Jeff. First they asked Carole for money for ice-cream cones. "You know, Mom," Todd said after she had given him what change she had in her pocketbook, "what we'd really like are milk shakes." His mother laughed and went upstairs for more money.

You may be thinking what Carole can't help but think - that if she'd said no, the boys would have left the house earlier; they'd have turned the corner before the drunk driver got there.

I worry about Todd's brother David. He looks so much like Todd that people expect him to be Todd. I worry about Todd's sister Lisa, because she and Todd were closest. I worry about Todd's kid sister Kristin. She was visiting a friend before the accident and hadn't seen Todd in two days. She's recently become very enthusiastic about tennis. Is she genuinely interested? Or is she trying to make up to us for Todd? And I worry about Jeff, Todd's cousin, because he lost his father four months before Todd was killed.

I pray every day he'll make it. I pray every day that all of us make it.

They say grief brings people closer together. It's not true - grief is isolating. It locks you up in your own heart. If Carole and I hadn't had such a good marriage, I think we'd have come apart. I was out of the house all day, but Carole was home, and everywhere she looked there was something to remind her of Todd. And I think the strain began to tell.

What saved us was the squirrel. If Kristin hadn't told Carole about the car in front of us hitting a squirrel and my getting out, pointlessly, to move the poor broken body to the side of the road and then sitting down on the curb sobbing, the silence might have won out over us. But that squirrel saved Carole and me. We talked to each other then. We realized we had to get help, and Carole took a part-time job to get out of the house.

And then of course there was the fox. How astonishing it was, when we'd never seen a fox before, to have one come and stand on the patio two days after Todd's death - just come and stand there staring at the kitchen window before it turned and slowly moved away.

Carole's pregnant sister came to be with her that afternoon. "I've been looking at a book of baby names," she said. "Did you know when you named Todd that it means 'fox'?"

Was Todd trying to tell us he's all right? I think you understand how much we want to believe that.

*Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul
Health Communications, Inc. (2003)*

*If you have a story to share about your grief journey,
please send it to ellen.pare@mccmh.net*

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

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

Wednesday, May 4

Tuesday, May 17

Wednesday, June 1

Tuesday, June 21

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

May 2011

Five Week Workshop

Wednesdays

May 4, 11, 18, 25, June 1

Macomb Intermediate School District
(call 586-307-9100 to sign up)

Craft Nite, Monday, May 23, 6pm-9pm

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.*