

Pain isn't the end of the story for grief. Love is.

Virginia A. Simpson, Ph.D., FT

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 Paul B, Hank K, Michael P, Joe, Dawn I, Dana H, George R, Shawn, Scott, and William M.

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

SAVE THE DATE!

Please plan to join us for our
2012 SOS Conference

“GOOD MOURNING”

A free one day event
for families and friends
who have lost a loved one to suicide

Saturday, April 21, 2012

at the
Macomb Intermediate School District

presented by:

Macomb County Crisis Center Survivors of Suicide Program

Details to follow in the next issue of this newsletter.



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.

January/February 2012

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

The Way We Grieve Now

Boarding a flight, Lisa Niemi pulled out her phone and texted “I love you” to her husband of 34 years, actor Patrick Swayze, who had died a year prior. “Either somewhere out there he received the message, or someone’s going, ‘Somebody loves me!’ And you know what? I figured it was a win-win situation.”

“I have a client who never turned off her husband’s cell phone after he died. She takes comfort in calling his voice mail to hear him speak,” says Claire Bidwell Smith, a bereavement specialist. “Rituals and routines like that are actually healthy in confronting your emotions and can hold a person in a secure place for longer.”

Actress Michelle Williams echoed the sentiment in the months after Heath Ledger’s death. “I wish we had rituals about grief,” she said in an interview with Vogue. “I wish it were still the Victorian times, and we could go from black to gray to mauve to pink.” Williams found

some solace in gardening. “I remember being on my hands and knees. The ground was cold and muddy. I pushed back the dead leaves and saw the bright green shoots of spring. Under all this decay something was growing,” she said.

“After a while you worry that the pain will pass and you’ll stop missing them, so you keep these connections,” says Smith, whose familiarity with the process is more than clinical. When her mother, a talented chef, passed away, she taught herself to tackle her mother’s recipes. “Cooking was a big part of her physical presence so when she was gone, so were the wonderful smells that reminded me of her. It was like losing one of my senses.”

Author Brooke Berman found similar solace through her mother’s passion for clothes. Berman spent a year dressed in her mother’s belongings. “I had a pair of her sunglasses adapted

with my prescription lenses. I wore her socks every day. I wore scarves and gloves and I’d tell myself it was my mom keeping me warm. It completed my relationship with her, or possibly continued it.”

Unfortunately, these cathartic gestures are often partnered with shame. On an online grief forum, members anonymously share their unusual habits, then pose the same question: “Is this normal?”

But nothing is normal in grief and no two mourners are the same. There is no uniform approach to loss. “The only thing that’s common is the feeling you’re losing your mind,” says Smith. “But once you share your coping rituals, however odd they may feel, you’ll find you’re not alone and not crazy at all. Then, you can start moving forward.”

*Piper Weiss
shine.yahoo.com (9/13/2010)*

HEART LINES

At Lake Scugog

1.
Where what I see comes to rest,
at the edge of the lake,
against what I think I see

and, up on the bank, who I am
maintains an uneasy truce
with who I fear I am,

while in the cabin's shade the gap between
the words I said
and those I remember saying

is just wide enough to contain
the remains that remain
of what I assumed I knew.

2.
Out in the canoe, the person I thought you were
gingerly trades spots
with the person you are

and what I believe I believe
sits uncomfortably next to
what I believe.

When I promised *I will always give you
what I want you to want,*
you heard, or desired to hear,

something else. As, over and in the lake,
the cormorant and its image
traced paths through the sky.

Troy Jollimore

Sharing the Journey

Always Daddy's Little Girl

by Tina Rumps

In 2001 my husband and I welcomed our first child into the world. What should have been some of the happiest times of my life soon became the worst. Suicide had been the topic of conversation plenty of times in our family. My grandfather – my dad's father – had taken his life at the age of 32. Along with my grandfather there were uncles and cousins that had taken their lives as well. Despite the family history of suicide in my dad's family, depression had never been an issue in our home. Now all of a sudden out of nowhere it seemed to consume my dad. He was no longer the same person. He became someone who saw himself as worthless and unlovable. He saw no hope, no light at the end of the tunnel.

In April 2003 my dad tried for the first time to take his life. After a few weeks in the hospital he came home and pretended to be okay. He did eventually get back into life somewhat but was never the same. The next year was like a roller coaster. There were good days and promises that he would never try to take his life again, but when you looked in his eyes they told a different story. There was a war going on inside him and he refused to let anyone help. He argued that he was okay and that he didn't need medication or counseling. When someone you love is hurting you want to do everything you can to help them and not being allowed to is very frustrating. Along with extreme frustration came confusion. Why was depression a problem for him now when it had never been one before? Would he keep his promise or would he try again to leave this world by his own hands? Not knowing and always wondering was the worst. All we could do was hope that he was sincere about his will to live and that he could overcome this disease that had taken us all by surprise.

God blessed us with another daughter in April 2004. Becoming a grandfather again seemed to bring life back into my dad. I visited my parents early in the summer that year. My dad was more like himself than he had been in a long time. It was good to see him that way again. I was more hopeful than ever that maybe this whole thing was behind us.

In the airport as we said our goodbyes, I never gave it a second thought that I might not ever see him again, but now I wish I had. On September 2, I left work and headed home to pick up our daughters from day care. Even though they were only in day care two days a week, I was having a hard time with it. For some reason that day was especially difficult for me. I called my dad hoping to hear some encouraging words.

As soon as I heard his voice I began to cry. After talking to him for only a few minutes I began to feel better. I don't remember everything we talked about but I do remember him saying some things that didn't make sense. When I

questioned him he became very short with me. His mood changed and he seemed distant. We ended our conversation with I love you's and that was the last time I spoke with my dad.

After hearing of my dad's suicide his words from just a few hours before flooded my mind and now they made sense. I was angry with him for choosing to leave us and at myself for not picking up on the clues that I felt I'd missed in our conversation. I was torn between my anger and my guilt. Why did he feel that suicide was the only way out? Why didn't he let us help him? Didn't he know how much we loved him? As I began to consider these questions I quickly realized that I may never have the answers but only guesses.

It has been more than 5 years since that life changing day and our family has had to create a new normal for ourselves, one without my dad. Over the years my frustration and anger have subsided. I no longer feel that urgent need to have all my questions answered. Now I feel sadness. I'm sad because I miss him so much and wish with all my heart that he knew his grandchildren and how much they want to know him.

I can't change the decision my dad made that day but I can visit as often as I want the place that brings him back to life – my memory. God has blessed me with many wonderful things and the memories of my dad are some of the ones most treasured.

Lifesavers (AFSP), Spring 2010

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

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

Wednesday, January 4

Tuesday, January 17

Wednesday, February 1

Tuesday, February 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

January 2012

Craft Nite, Monday, January 30, 6pm-9pm

February 2012

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

March 2012

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

April 2012

Survivors Conference

Saturday, April 21

Macomb Intermediate School District

Please save the date!

Craft Nite, Monday, April 30, 6pm-9pm

May 2012

Five Week Workshop

Craft Nite, Monday, May 21, 6pm-9pm

June 2012

Balloon and Butterfly Release

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

July 2012

Craft Nite, Monday, July 30, 6pm-9pm

August 2012

Memory Stone Workshop

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

September 2012

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

October 2012

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

November 2012

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

December 2012

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.*