

You gain strength,
courage, and confidence
by every experience
in which you really stop
to look fear in the face.
You are able
to say to yourself,
"I lived through this horror.
I can take the next thing
that comes along."
Eleanor Roosevelt

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 Mark P and Joe F, and also for Riverhouse Banquet Center's generous support of our holiday program.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

is published bi-monthly by the
Macomb Crisis Center

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Macomb County Crisis Center Presents: 7th 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 21, 2012

10:00 am - 3:00 pm (registration begins at 9:30 am)

Conference Speakers:

Sally Grabick, author of *The Reason Why*
Caelan Kuban,

Director of the National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children
Shawn Force, Common Ground

Nancy Buyle, Student Assistance Specialist
Jean Larch, author of *Dying to Be Free*

Sessions for Children:

SandCastles Grief Support for Children and Families
will hold concurrent sessions for children ages 6-18

Conference Highlights:

Attend a special drumming performance
Attend a support group
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 5, 2012
To register, or for further information, please
call 586-948-6103 or
e-mail jeni.baldwin@mccmh.net

Lunch is provided. Donations accepted.



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.

March/April 2012

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

Am I Losing My Mind?

I'm not surprised that the most often-asked question I get from bereaved people is, "Am I crazy?" In grief, thoughts, feelings and behaviors are different from what you normally experience, and it's only natural that you may not know if they are normal or abnormal. The experiences described below are common after a death. A major goal of this article is to simply validate these experiences so you will know you are not "crazy!"

You may feel a sense of restlessness, agitation, impatience and ongoing confusion. Disconnected thoughts race through your mind, and strong emotions may be overwhelming. You may be unable to complete any tasks. You may start a project but be unable to finish it. You may be forgetful and

ineffective at work. Early morning and late at night are times when you may feel most disoriented and confused. These feelings are often accompanied by fatigue and lack of initiative. Everyday pleasures may not seem to matter anymore.

You may also experience a restless searching for the person who has died. Yearning and preoccupation with memories can leave you feeling drained.

You might even experience a shift in perception; other people may begin to resemble the person who died. You might think you catch a glimpse of the person you loved so much. Or you might see a car similar to theirs go past, and you might find yourself following the car! You may hear them enter

the home, as they had done so many times in the past.

Other common experiences during this time include difficulties with eating and sleeping. You may experience a loss of appetite, or find yourself overeating. Even when you do eat, you may be unable to taste the food. Difficulty in going to sleep and early morning awakening also are common.

You might find it helpful to remember that disorganization following loss always comes before any kind of re-orientation. While it may seem that you're "going crazy," keep in mind that your disorganization and confusion are actually stepping stones on your path toward healing.

*Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.
Grief Digest, Volume 1*

HEART LINES

You Left Me

You left me with the bills, the house, and the boy
You left me with this unstoppable mental noise.
I don't know how to mow the lawn or unplug the
bathroom sink.

I hate the thought of shoveling snow,
Getting up early to hear the shovel clink.
I'm afraid to turn the grill on; such things should
not be scary.

If you were in my shoes, I doubt you would be
merry.

The garbage is smelly and the recycle bin is a
pain.

I struggle with all of this and figuring out what is
to gain.

You left me with the loneliness that burns so
deep inside

Some days I wish to see no one, but sit in my
room and cry.

You left me with questions and fears of am I
doing anything right,

The endless worries and thoughts that keep me
up all hours of the night.

You left me with the option of what I am to do,
But most of all what you left me with are some
good and bad memories of you.

You left me with a boy who will want to know his
daddy,

And through his pain I will be aching inside very
badly.

You left me with the doubt and regret of
everything I did wrong,

The day I can come to terms with this will be time
long gone.

This list I am sure I can make go on and on,
But for the sake of my son I must look forward
and keep pushing on.

I am not sure where I will end up or how I will be
on the way,

One thing is for certain, two years later, maybe
for the rest of my life, you still cross my mind
each day.

And even though you left me I will make sure
Bryce and I are still going to be okay,
Because I'm walking out from a dark past, so a
brighter future has to be on the way.

Heather Finn

Sharing the Journey 2011 Holiday Program Speech by Helena Thurber

When I accepted Tom's proposal, I intended to be married to him forever. Alas, 'twas not to be. We divorced after 20 years of marriage, and 3 years later, he remarried. Sadly, things somehow went wrong for Tom, and he ended his own life at age 58, much to the shock of everyone. There was a memorial service scheduled, which my 3 boys and I attended. Bill, the oldest, almost didn't go to his own father's funeral. He and his brothers were very, very angry and very, very sad. It was a grueling experience.

At the time that Tom ended his life, I had fallen in love with another gentleman, whom I married later that same year. I was incredibly happy; however, that marriage was cut short for a different reason. Francis suffered a heart attack in an airport, just as he and I were changing planes. I was broken-hearted and stunned that this could happen. But I knew what to do to help myself. I used the tools that I had learned, post divorce, from a group called Beginning Experience. I also used prayer, counseling, and exercise.

Bill was a particularly gifted athlete and excelled at most everything he did, including music. He was an avid tennis player and so good at exercising that he became a personal trainer. He was a gourmet cook and would make me hungry when he called to tell me what delicacy he was making for himself and his friends. He even made a cooking demonstration video, which he submitted to a Food TV station. And Bill had a great sense of humor and he kept me and everyone else laughing our socks off.

His college degree was in marketing, and he used that tool to market himself as a voice-over artist. Unfortunately, with the down-turn in the economy, his jobs dwindled. He wasn't willing to re-locate anywhere else nor do anything else. He had serious financial difficulties and I tried to help by paying his rent.

On August 25, 2010, I received a conference call from my two younger boys, Peter and Patrick. I kept praising them for knowing how to connect with each other like that. Patrick said he had something he wanted to talk to me about and asked me to sit down. He said simply, "Mom, Bill went to Heaven today." (Those were the exact words I had said to Patrick 12 years earlier to tell him of his own father's suicide.)

I kept saying, "No! No! No! No!" Peter told me there had been an accident on the mountain in Colorado. It took weeks before I knew that my Bill had ended his own life – in much the same way his father had.

To say I was devastated would be an understatement. My life stopped that day. I walked around in a fog for

months; I cried fountains of tears.

After we hung up, I sat there shattered, broken, and completely numb. I could not think straight. I only called one person – Bill's friend I had met when I last visited him in Colorado 4 years earlier. That was the place where Bill lived, worked, and died. The woman, a psycho-therapist, and I became instant friends and it was she who helped counsel me through this past year and a quarter. I thank God that she was home to receive my call that fateful day.

Two friends suggested a new group for me to attend – SOS. I attended the spring SOS Workshop, which helped me so much that I also went to the fall Workshop. Both were extremely helpful in my coming to a better understanding of suicide in general and of Bill's suicide in particular. I loved Bill enormously and I knew that he loved me. It wasn't about that. It was about Bill's finding an end to his unbelievable pain.

I was well-versed in the stages of grief, but I knew that I had to do the work to get through the deep down, terrible pain I felt. Whether I liked it or not, I knew that no one else could work the stages of grief for me. Prayer and exercise had a huge impact. Last month I was finally able to pull myself up out of the abyss of darkness that had devastated me.

I am so grateful that I found SOS and that I attended the workshops. My life is now filled with great hope, reconciliation, and gratitude. With continuing my grief recovery, I wish to heal even further and then to help somebody else who has lost a loved one to suicide. More, I could not wish for you.

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings (1st Wednesday and 3rd Tuesday of each month)

Wednesday, March 7

Tuesday, March 20

Wednesday, April 4

Tuesday, April 17

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

March 2012

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

April 2012

Survivors Conference "Good Mourning"

Saturday, April 21

10am-3pm

(registration begins 9:30am)

Macomb Intermediate School District
see back page for details

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.