

Over time,
the more we
name our struggles,
the more they are
rendered powerless.
We find relief.
We begin to feel again
Rebekah Lyons

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 Darryl, Anthony K, Rob W, Keith S, Tanya, and Mitzie L.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

is published bi-monthly by the Macomb Crisis Center

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MEMORY STONE WORKSHOP

The 13th Annual Memory Stone Workshop

will be held on

Wednesday, July 24, 2013

6:30-8:30 pm

6555 Fifteen Mile Road
Sterling Heights, MI 48312

*In case of inclement weather,
the event will be held on Thursday, July 25, instead*

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

Please register in advance by e-mailing jeni.koviak@mccmh.net or by calling 586-948-6103. Please tell us the following information:

- Your name, phone number, and e-mail address
- If you are bringing others with you, how many will be in your group
- How many stones your group plans to make
- Any questions you may have

Note: Because we mix the cement outdoors, we will reschedule for the following day if there is inclement weather. If the weather seems questionable on Wednesday, July 24, please check your phone or e-mail for a message from Jeni, or call 586-948-6103 for an event update.

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

July/August 2013

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

Thoughts on Guilt

Guilt is feeling sorry for something we've done or failed to do. It comes with the realization that we have failed to live up to our own expectations for ourselves. Of course, we are not perfect; no one is.

When someone we love dies by suicide, it is natural to go back and review whether we could have said or done anything to change this difficult reality. Since suicide is out of our control, we try to gain control any way we can. By blaming ourselves we take control of a part of the suicide – the "if only..." part.

This is a very important step for many survivors. It is important to express these feelings of guilt or regret. The way we feel is the way we feel; no one can truly tell us not to feel guilty.

We need to realistically ask ourselves this: if we did something different, could we have prevented the suicide from ever happening? And if we answer "yes," how do we know for sure?

Survivors often speculate, "If only I had told him more often how much I loved him, he would not have made this choice." But can one person's love for another make that person's pain permanently go away? Rationally, we know each individual has numerous needs, many of which are not expressed. It would seem irrational to think one person could meet another's every need.

When we explore these feelings of guilt and regret, we come to understand the limits of our own responsibility. Then

comes another of the hardest tasks for many survivors – to shift that responsibility to their loved one, knowing that he or she was in pain.

It is important to remember that we probably felt okay about having angry feelings toward our loved one when they were around. It is understandable to be angry with them about causing their own death.

Guilt is a strong feeling that does not disappear with time alone. When our minds, bodies, and spirits are ready to address this complex emotion, the sense of guilt will decrease.

Virginia Adams, MA, LLP

HEART LINES

Journey

Why do I call this
a journey?

You may feel like you're
spiraling all alone
in a dark whirlpool
and we're talking about
journeying?

With any death we go on a
journey that can lead
to increased self-awareness.

When that death was caused
by suicide
it's very important
to look at that journey
and to acknowledge it.

You are asking questions
about the meaning of life
and the meaning of death
and you want to know
where you are in all of that –
and if you even have a right
to ask, to ponder.

You do have that right –
to look at those questions
and to find your answers.

That's what this journey
to healing is all about –

finding your answers
and
finding out more about you.

*Pamela Farlow Wolgast
Journey: A Story for Survivors (1978)*

Sharing the Journey Sand Dollars and Tidal Waves

by Yvonne Lancaster

The creamy white sand dollars felt velvety and cool moving through my fingers. I had removed them from the kitchen windowsill, attempting to examine them more closely. I was hoping to discover something new about them, hoping to learn why they are so good at surviving constant changes.

Sand dollars, introduced to me by my now-deceased son, have spawned many stories. "Legends of the Sand Dollar" is the tale of five doves that live inside a sand dollar; when the sand dollar is opened, it spreads good will and peace.

My son, Brian, was an avid scuba diver, and he loved the sea. Brian died in a tragic car crash caused by a drunk driver on Dec. 22, 1985. We buried Brian on Christmas Eve day. He was 19 — a perfect son, brother and friend. Many who knew him would say he's an "old soul." He was giving, caring, loving and compassionate, all the wonderful qualities of a special person who cares about others and the world around him.

The devastating loss and heartbreak of Brian's death has always defied any logic my mind and soul were capable of comprehending, let alone accepting. The intense grieving period lasted for about three years. I was very guarded, not attending events or functions that could intensify the memories. I was extremely quiet, tearful, isolated — but worst of all, I wasn't communicating and being "my old self" with my surviving children Lizzie and Timmy.

The three of us sat down to celebrate my 42nd birthday. I wasn't sure I could do this; it was the first I had celebrated since Brian's death. I stared at the piece of cake in front of me. I couldn't pick up my fork. The tears welled up and fell on the frosting of the cake. "Why should I have a birthday? Brian can't. It should have been me who died, not him."

"Mom, don't say that," my son Tim said. "We need you. It was an accident we couldn't predict or control."

"Mom, where's the faith and hope you have always talked to us about?" Lizzie said.

I looked into their precious faces and saw their concern and sadness. I knew I had to go on in a different way. I knew I had to deal with my living and suffering children and let go of my grief and pain as best I could. We lit a candle in Brian's memory and together we renewed our faith, hope and love in our family knowing that we would all be together again, someday.

As I cleared the table, I moved toward the sink and I looked out of the window. A mourning dove sat facing me on a branch not far from the kitchen window. I reached for a sand dollar and broke it into five pieces. Like the legend, I decided to open the door to peace and good will.

In nature and in life, we are like the sand dollar. We survive constant changes, rolling back and forth in life's tidal wave, weathering storms we would never expect. We do our best to land on the shore to appreciate another day.

*opentohope.com
August 21, 2009*

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

1st Wednesday
and 3rd Tuesday of each month
Wednesday, July 3
Tuesday, July 16
Wednesday, August 7
Tuesday, August 20
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

*We have moved!
Please see Upcoming Events
for new meeting location!*

Questions? Call 586-307-9100 or
listen to the message at 586-948-6103

Upcoming Events

WE HAVE MOVED!

Monthly group meetings take place at
6555 Fifteen Mile Road
Sterling Heights, MI 48312
(Craft Nite will continue at MISD)

6555 Fifteen Mile is between Van Dyke and Mound. Access the building by turning north from 15 Mile onto Stanley Drive. Pull into the very first parking lot on the right, which is at the west end of the building. Drive all the way down to the end of the parking lot and enter through the glass doors in the corner.

July 2013

Group Meetings
Wednesday, July 3, 7pm-9pm
Tuesday, July 16, 7pm-9pm
6555 Fifteen Mile, Sterling Heights, MI 48312

Memory Stone Workshop
Wednesday, July 24, 6:30-8:30 pm
6555 Fifteen Mile, Sterling Heights, MI 48312
(Please register. See back page for details.)

SOS Craft Nite
Monday, July 29, 6pm-9pm
Macomb Intermediate School District*

August 2013

Group Meetings
Wednesday, August 7, 7pm-9pm
Tuesday, August 20, 7pm-9pm
6555 Fifteen Mile, Sterling Heights, MI 48312

SOS Craft Nite
Monday, August 26, 6pm-9pm
Macomb Intermediate School District*

***Macomb Intermediate School District**
44001 Garfield Road (south of Hall Road)
Clinton Township, MI 48038
Check monitor at entrance
for room number.

Call 586-948-6103 to listen to a message
with updated information on meeting rooms.