

You just do it.
You force yourself to get up.
You force yourself to put one
foot before the other...
You fight. You cry. You curse.
Then you go about
the business of living.
That's how I've done it.
There's no other way.

Elizabeth Taylor

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 Daryl G and Emma, and to Trinity Lutheran Church, Clinton Township, for the use of their Community Center for our Holiday Program.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

is published bi-monthly by the
Macomb Crisis Center

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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.

We are moving!
**Please see Upcoming Events
inside this issue
for more information!**

SAVE THE DATES!

**Annual SOS Conference
Macomb Intermediate School District
Saturday, April 13, 2013**

Featuring keynote speaker
Donna L. Schuurman, EdD, FT
Executive Director
The Dougy Center for Grieving
Children & Families

**SOS Spring 6 Week Workshop
Macomb Intermediate School District**

Wednesday, April 3

Wednesday, April 10

Wednesday, April 17

Wednesday, April 24

Tuesday, April 30

Wednesday, May 8

Please note that April 30 is a Tuesday

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

January/February 2013

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

Coping with Stigma

Survivors deal with the social implications of suicide in different ways. Some try to keep suicide a secret which cannot be mentioned. The danger of this approach is that silence limits the bereaved's opportunity for catharsis, the ability to check out distorted ideas, and to resolve irrational guilt. Often the power of the unsaid becomes magnified, and much emotional energy is taken up protecting the secret.

Others deal with the fear of stigma by attributing the death to other causes: "She probably had a brain tumor; we should have done an autopsy." "It was an accident." This becomes particularly difficult when one has to communicate the truth to one's own children. Some parents may be tempted to protect their children from the hurt of knowing the truth by telling them the death was an accident. Others may decide to say nothing, theorizing their children would not understand.

Some might fear that their children may learn the facts through their friends. Hence, the most prudent course is to be candid with one's children, answering their questions honestly, telling them as much as they can handle and keeping the doors open for future talk.

Some survivors may feel a strong urge to escape. Some want to escape their obligations. As one grieving mother said, "I just want to run away from home; I don't want any responsibility for the other children." Most often, though, it is a desire to escape from one's social environment. A move to a new place, where the tragedy or the family is not known, is seen as a way to begin a new life. As one widow put it: "I get upset at people. I don't know if they are there to interview or critique me, if they are nosy or concerned. It would be easier if I didn't know anybody."

Finally, there are those who struggle through the humiliation of being stigmatized. They might sense that people are avoiding them. They may hear spoken or unspoken comments: "You drove him to it." "She was fine when she was with us; what did you do to her?" Such remarks or rumors can hurt deeply at a time when one is most vulnerable and in most need of understanding.

On the other hand, friends and family often struggle over what to say. The fear of saying the wrong thing keeps them away from the survivors who need their support. Sometimes just going up to the bereaved and saying, "I just don't know what to say," or "I am here because I care about you," or giving a hug may be all that is needed and what is most appreciated.

*Father Arnaldo Pangrazzi
St. Anthony Messenger
January 1984*

HEART LINES

Not Goodbye

It's not a goodbye this time
Just letting certain memories slip from my soul
Not heavy baggage I carry around
Or anger I cannot control

It's not your final action that defines me
Just a part of what my past holds
Not sadness that fills my eyes
Or the tragic story always told

It's not that I like what you did
Just don't hate you for it either
Not something I will forget
Or own your suicide neither

It's the fact that I feel at peace now
Just working through in time
And putting together new pieces
Of a life that I call mine

It's the way I know what my heart can bear
Just would have been different with you here
And I'm not afraid anymore
No resentment, no tear

It's not that I don't expect rough days
Just few and far between
I've become more patient with myself
In a world where time flies by, it seems

It's not a goodbye
Just an 'until I see you again'
Watch over us for now
My husband, and my friend

Heather Finn

Sharing the Journey

I'll Gladly Pay the Price

By Heidi Bryan

On January 7, 1995 my life and world changed forever. That was the day my older brother killed himself. I felt as though someone snuck up behind me with a two-by-four and smacked me on the back of my head and I was leveled. My belief system, my faith, and my foundation cracked and tumbled down inside of me. I wasn't even sure if I still loved my brother when he died and I was devastated. All I could think about was how his wife, children, and friends must feel.

It was then I realized that suicide was no longer an option and now, I had no choice but to live.

I have struggled with suicidal thoughts since childhood and there were many times when I started to prepare myself to die. I even aborted an attempt when I realized I would be found in time and would survive. When my brother died, I had a plan, a back-up plan, and a back-up plan to the back-up plan — I was not going to survive. But now I had to live because I knew that whatever my brother was thinking before he killed himself — like we'd be better off without him or we'd get over it — he was wrong. It was his disease or suicidality talking to him and not the truth.

If it applied to him, it had to apply to me. This forced me to get help and stick with it until I found the right therapist and the right medication. I learned that for me, thinking about suicide was like a drink is to an alcoholic and I had to treat it like a chronic disease. I learned that I have to be vigilant and do my best to maintain a healthy lifestyle. I learned to have a safety plan. Most important, I learned to find someone I trust — my husband — to talk to when I start to feel overwhelmed or suicidal. There's something almost magical about verbalizing the thought without fear of being hospitalized — it takes away the power and intensity of the thought and helps me to see outside myself and seek other options.

As a family member who has lost a loved one to suicide and a survivor myself, I got involved in

suicide prevention. I realized I couldn't talk about getting rid of the stigma and shame associated with suicide without self disclosing. We won't start talking about it unless we start talking about it! I've written articles and pamphlets and speak openly about my struggles with suicide and I have no intention of stopping. There are times when I wonder if that's why I can't get that temporary or part-time job or what my neighbors must think if they Google me — but if that's the price I must pay, then I'll gladly pay it.

I pray that by sharing my experience, strength, and hope I am helping others to conquer their suicidality.

National Council Magazine
www.TheNationalCouncil.org
2012, issue 2

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

1st Wednesday
and 3rd Tuesday of each month
Wednesday, January 2
Tuesday, January 15
Wednesday, February 6
Tuesday, February 19
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

We are moving!
Please see Upcoming Events
for new meeting locations!

The morning group will not be held in
January or February.

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

Upcoming Events

WE ARE MOVING!

Beginning in January 2013, the Survivors of Suicide program will no longer meet at Fox Pointe Center, 46360 Gratiot, in Chesterfield Township.

Please bear with us as we work to secure a new permanent location.

January 2013

SOS Support Group Meeting
Wednesday, January 2, 7-9 pm
Macomb Intermediate School District*

SOS Support Group Meeting
Tuesday, January 15, 7-9 pm
Macomb Intermediate School District*

SOS Craft Nite
Monday, January 28, 6pm-9pm
location to be determined

February 2013

SOS Support Group Meeting
Wednesday, February 6, 7-9 pm
Macomb Intermediate School District*

SOS Support Group Meeting
Tuesday, February 19, 7-9 pm
Macomb Intermediate School District*

SOS Craft Nite
Monday, February 25, 6pm-9pm
location to be determined

**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
and Craft Nite locations.