

Surviving After Suicide

Reaching Out To Help Others

Managing Holiday Grief, Anxiety & Stress

As the holiday season approaches, many survivors of suicide feel anxious, lost and troubled as they face the “happiest time of the year” without a loved one.

But with a little early planning, survivors may be able to manage their holiday stress while finding new ways to remember their lost loved one.

“The first holiday season after a loss can be especially hard, and many people struggle with special days long after a loved one is gone,” said Sandy Parham, the Helpline Center’s survivor support services coordinator. “Our hope is that we can help people plan ahead for the holidays to minimize the anticipatory stress they might be feeling and to make the actual holidays manageable.”

Suicide survivors should consider planning out reasonable expectations for the holiday season. This might include carefully accepting only party invitations where supportive family and friends are present, taking time alone to process feelings and allowing yourself to feel a wide range of emotions.

It may also help to remember a loved one by starting new holiday traditions. For example, consider the following ways to remember your loved one this holiday season.

- Buy a special memory ornament each year to place on your tree in remembrance of your loved one.
- Make a donation to a charity in honor of your loved one.
- Light a candle and leave it burning in your loved one’s memory during family gatherings.

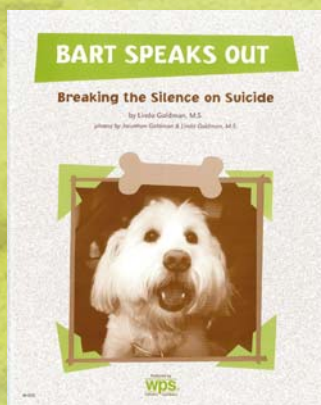


Also consider giving up traditions that cause pain such as hanging certain ornaments or watching certain movies, and form an escape plan if gatherings become overwhelming.

“It’s important for survivors to express their feelings honestly to their family and friends. They need to be able to feel how they feel, and not feel guilty about their emotions,” Parham said. “You might feel some joy, but you might also feel anger and hurt. Those feelings don’t go away because it’s a special holiday. It’s just important to take care of yourself and do the best you can.”

For more information on holiday grief, read *The Empty Chair: Handling Grief on Holidays and Special Occasions*. You can find this book at http://www.amazon.com/Empty-Chair-Handling-HolidaysOccasions/dp/0801063779/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1319481536&sr=1-1

The *Surviving After Suicide Support Group* helps those who lost someone to suicide. The group is facilitated by a social worker who is also a survivor. The focus is on connecting survivors and supporting one another. Any survivor over 16 is welcome to attend. The group meets from 7 to 8:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month in Sioux Falls at the Helpline Center at 1000 N. West Avenue. For more information, call 605-339-4357.



This book is one of many available to survivors of suicide. Call the Helpline center at 605-339-4357 for more information.

The *Surviving After Suicide Class*, taught by a survivor and a mental health professional, is a nine-week series of educational and support sessions for survivors of suicide offered in Sioux Falls three times a year at no charge. The class is structured with specific topics discussed each week. Any survivor is welcome, but pre-registration is required. For more information or to register for the next session which begins, Tuesday, Jan. 3, please call 211 or (605) 339-4357.

Holiday Survivor Potluck

The Surviving After Suicide Monthly Support Group is holding a holiday potluck during the first half of its December meeting. The group will be gathering from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on Thursday, December 1 at the Helpline Center in Sioux Falls.

This meeting will allow time for group members to share the ways they cope with the holidays, while also grieving the loss of a loved one. At a time which may seem hopeless, this meeting will offer ideas to comfort and empower you.

Survivors who have experienced holidays without their loved ones are encouraged to attend and share what they have done to make the holidays more bearable. Did you change traditions? Start new ones? Find special ways to memorialize your loved one? Come and share what has worked for you with others new in their grief.

You may also email suggestions for reducing stress and handling grief during the holidays to sandy@helplinecenter.org, and those suggestions will be shared with those who attend the meeting. Names will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

Don't forget, the meeting starts early! Come at 6:30 pm and join in the holiday potluck. Bring a main dish, salad or dessert to share. The Helpline Center will supply the plates and utensils.



The following websites are resources for those grieving the loss of a family member or friend

www.compassionatefriends.org

www.suicidology.org

www.survivorsofsuicide.com

www.save.org



My Acceptance Prayer

“Make me willing to accept what I cannot, fill my mind with understanding, my heart with trust, there are some things that I must accept as facts, difficult though they may be to face now. May my spirit be open and accepting.”

by Abby Willowroot © 2008
www.spiralgoddess.com

Walk To Honor Loved Ones

The Helpline Center will host its first-ever suicide prevention and awareness walk next year.



The Helpline Center’s Step Forward to Prevent Suicide will include a 1.5 mile walk and a 5k run on Saturday, June 23, 2012 in Sioux Falls. The event will conclude with a ceremony remembering the loved ones lost to suicide of walkers.

The Helpline Center answers the statewide suicide prevention crisis line, and also offers suicide survivor support services. A planning committee of local suicide survivors is helping plan the walk.

The goals of the walk include: honoring loved ones lost to suicide, raising awareness and understanding of suicide, supporting close friends and family members who have struggled with thoughts of suicide and supporting the suicide prevention and survivor programs at the Helpline Center.

People may register to participate as individuals or as a family or a team. Online registration will be available beginning in April. **100% of the proceeds raised will stay in our local communities to support suicide prevention efforts and survivor support services.**

Details for the walk, including the time and location, will be set in the next month, and a special email will be sent highlighting this information.

“Step Forward To Prevent Suicide will offer people in our community the chance to honor a loved one lost to suicide, while also taking action to help prevent such losses,” said Helpline Center Executive Director Janet Kittams-Lalley. “We also hope that people who have struggled with thoughts of suicide will come out with their friends and family to support the cause. It’s a chance for everyone touched by suicide to step forward for prevention.”

Watch www.helplinecenter.org for more information coming soon!

Event Raises Prevention Dollars

The 4th Annual Swen Open took place in July at the Minnehaha Country Club in Sioux Falls. This event included a day of golf and a dinner that raised \$21,987 for suicide prevention.

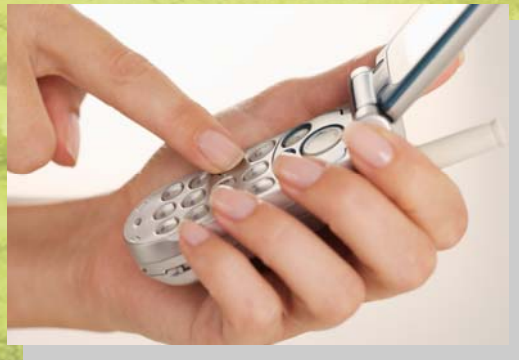
The tournament was started by a group of local suicide survivors as a tribute to a close friend who died by suicide. Over the past few years the event has grown to become a significant golf tournament benefitting the suicide prevention and aftercare services of the Helpline Center. The funds raised through the tournament will be used to support:

- The Suicide Prevention LifeLine, 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The Helpline Center answers this crisis line 24/7 for anyone having thoughts of suicide or family/friends concerned for a loved one. The LifeLine is the only certified crisis line in the state of South Dakota.
- Suicide prevention trainings. The Helpline Center holds trainings across the state, including at high schools, to help provide tools for assisting individuals having thoughts of suicide.
- Aftercare services. The Helpline Center also provides grief support to survivors of suicide through information packets, classes and support groups.

The Helpline Center thanks the following Swen Open sponsors:

- Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center
- CorTrust Bank, N.A.
- Johnson, Heidepriem & Abdallah, LLP
- Johnson, Miner, Marlow, Woodward & Huff, Prof. LLC & Dakota Trailer Manufacturing, Inc
- Lewis Drug
- McDowell Financial Group
- Murphy, Goldammer & Prendergast, L.L.P.
- Pennfield Animal Health
- Sheldon F. Reese Foundation
- Sherman Self Storage
- Sioux Nation Holdings, Inc.

The Helpline Center will be hosting a conference for survivors on Saturday, November 19th from 1 to 3:30 pm at the Non-Profit Center at 1000 N. West Ave. in Sioux Falls in recognition of International Survivors of Suicide Day. Please join us as we view the AFSP healing program featuring survivors who will address the questions that so many newly bereaved survivors face and hear national experts on suicide share information on what we currently know about suicide and grief. A healing service will follow the program.



Survivors of suicide are up to 5 times more likely to attempt suicide. If you are having thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-273-TALK.

National Speaker Coming To Sioux Falls

The Helpline Center will bring Dr. Michelle Linn-Gust, the president of the American Association of Suicidology and a survivor, to speak in Sioux Falls May 10, 2012. There will be an afternoon session for mental health professionals and an evening event open to the community from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on survivor grief. Find out more about Michelle at www.michellelinngust.com and look for more details to be announced soon at helplinecenter.org

Support Survivor Services

The Helpline Center is here 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to help those impacted by the loss of a loved one to suicide. Please consider making a donation to the Helpline Center, and helps us continue to offer services to those who are hurting. We also welcome you to make a donation in memory of a loved one.

<http://www.helplinecenter.org/Contribute.aspx>



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF SUICIDOLOGY
Dedicated to the Understanding and Prevention of Suicide

Dear Survivor,

The Helpline Center recently unveiled several changes to its branding image and mission. The new mission for the Helpline Center is “Making lives better by giving support, offering hope and creating connections all day, every day.”

Our new logo is softer and more approachable, while communicating clearly that we are here to connect, prevent and support those who need help.

We hope these new changes will help us better reach those who are having thoughts of suicide so that we can offer them help, while continuing to connect with survivors of suicide who need hope.

During this upcoming holiday season, we remind you to call if you need to talk. We are here for you. All day, every day. Just call dial 211 or 1-800-273-8255.

The Helpline Center