

# Surviving After Suicide

A supportive and informational  
newsletter for those impacted  
by the suicide of a loved one.

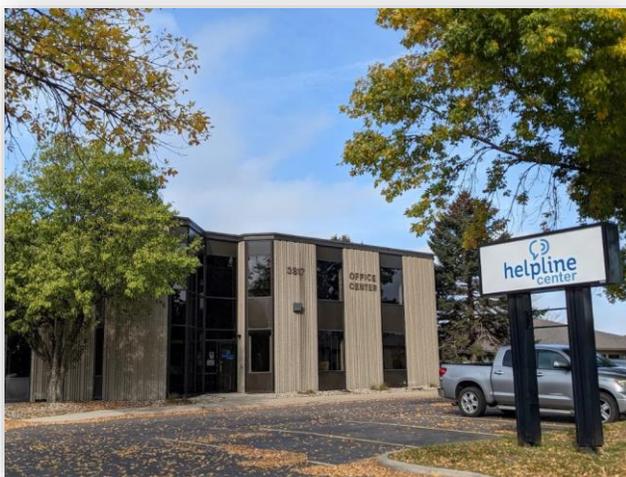
February, 2022 Edition



As many of you are aware, the Helpline Center is undergoing many important and positive changes.

- We have recently moved to a **new location** at **3817 S. Elmwood Ave**. It has been a daunting but welcome transition and we are still settling in to our new environment. The new building is a healthier, happier work environment for staff and large enough to accommodate future growth.
- As **988** becomes a reality in July of 2022, we will see a transformation of how individuals and families are connected to mental health and substance use services. Our presence in South Dakota communities will take on a new dimension with a positive impact for South Dakotans. Watch for updates on this as the launch time for 988 draws closer.
- We have an ever-increasing offering of **support programs** for individuals and families to cover needs such as childcare, caregiver support, women's health navigation, outreach support for older citizens, substance use care coordination, and SD CARES.
- We continue to support a robust **volunteer network** to benefit non-profit organizations in the 4-county Sioux Empire region, the Black Hills region, and the city of Brookings. We offer residents of those communities a host of opportunities to contribute their time, treasure, and talent.

The constant in this ever-changing landscape of ours is the Helpline Center's dedication to "making lives better by giving support, offering hope, and creating connections, all day, every day." There are dozens of ways in which each of us as Helpline Center staff work toward this goal every day, even as our roles and the scope of our jobs evolve.



For the past four years, I have been the Grief Support Coordinator for the Helpline Center. I have been honored and humbled to have stood by many of you as you wept, remembered, mourned, learned, hoped, and yes, even laughed. I have never stopped being moved by the stories of lives tragically lost to suicide, but also by the stories of who your loved ones were and how incredibly loved and cherished they continue to be. I greatly admire the courage and resilience displayed by each of you.



Having said that, it is with bittersweet feelings that I announce that I have accepted a new position with the Helpline Center as the Volunteer Connections Manager and began transitioning to that role on January 24, 2022.



You have probably heard the saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Actually, there is another saying that is probably more accurate but is not quite as well known: 'The quickest way to become an old dog is to quit learning new tricks.' (Author Kenneth L. Higbee)

I want you all to know that the Helpline Center remains earnestly committed to providing support for survivors of suicide loss. I have agreed to an extended period of job sharing in which I will continue to support the programs that we offer to provide hope and healing to survivors both old and new until such time as a new Grief Support

Coordinator is found. I will be facilitating monthly support group, holding the 10-week education and support class, compiling the quarterly newsletter, sending those handwritten cards, being available to listen, and mourning and celebrating those lives that have ended much too soon. Even after a new Grief Support Coordinator is found, I hope that I see many of you at events such as the annual Step Forward to Prevent Suicide Walk in June. Through my work with the survivor community, I have been gifted with friendships that I am committed (in the good way) to maintaining and strengthening. I thank you sincerely for all of your patience, your trust, and for sharing your precious loved ones with me.

I fully trust a new Grief Support Coordinator will bring a strong sense of dedication and commitment to our survivor support services, but with fresh perspective and new ideas.

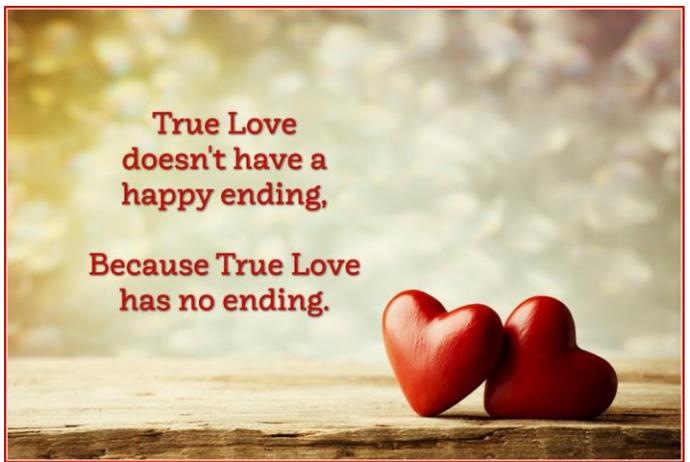
On an unrelated note, another important change to our team is that Sheri Nelson will leave her position as Suicide Prevention Director on February 4, 2022 to become the Executive Director of NAMI South Dakota. We wish Sheri well in her exciting new role!

As we say in class, "We're not moving on, we're moving forward."

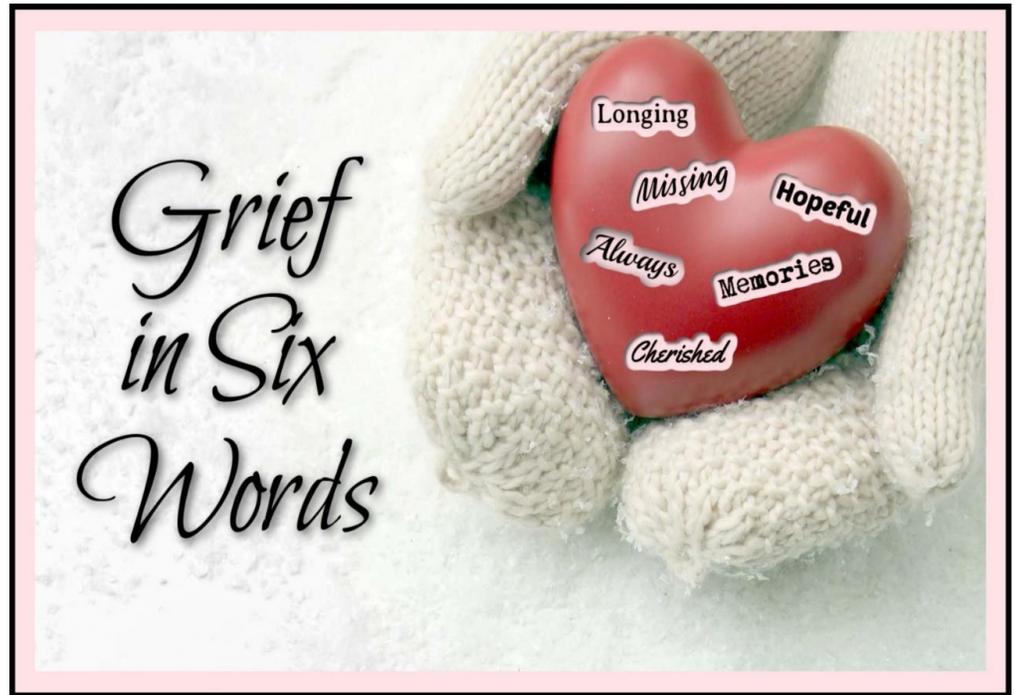
All my best,

*Jennie*

Jennie



Legend has it that famous author Ernest Hemingway, out to lunch at the Algonquin, bet a table full of fellow writers he could write a short story in just six words. His companions had their doubts and wagered ten dollars each to put Hemingway to the test. As the story goes, Hemingway believed the resulting story to be his finest work ever: *“For sale: Baby shoes. Never worn.”*



Individual narratives about grief and loss are detailed, nuanced, complex and ongoing. Each grieving person has a unique story to tell, with a past, present, and future. The thought of telling these stories in their entirety, for many, can seem impossibly overwhelming.

This is why the challenge of choosing the perfect six words to tell your grief story can be so freeing. The six-word story is unassuming, uncomplicated, manageable, and yet surprisingly powerful. *(Reprinted with permission from "griefinsixwords.com.")*

On Valentine's Day this year, the Helpline Center will post six-word stories that you, as survivors of suicide loss, have written. In a way, these can be Valentines sent to your loved one. Here is what we would like you to do:

Write your own six-word story about grief. Please write about feelings. Do not include names. Email your six-word story to [griefsupport@helplinecenter.org](mailto:griefsupport@helplinecenter.org) with "Six Words" in the subject line. You can have us post these with your name or post them anonymously. Please specify in your email which way you would prefer your six-word story to be displayed. We will accept up to three (3) submissions per survivor.

Here are some examples, just to give you some ideas:

*"I miss those baby blue eyes."*

*"You were gone before you left."*

*"Wild heart with a gypsy soul."*

*"Really stuck in what-ifs sometimes."*

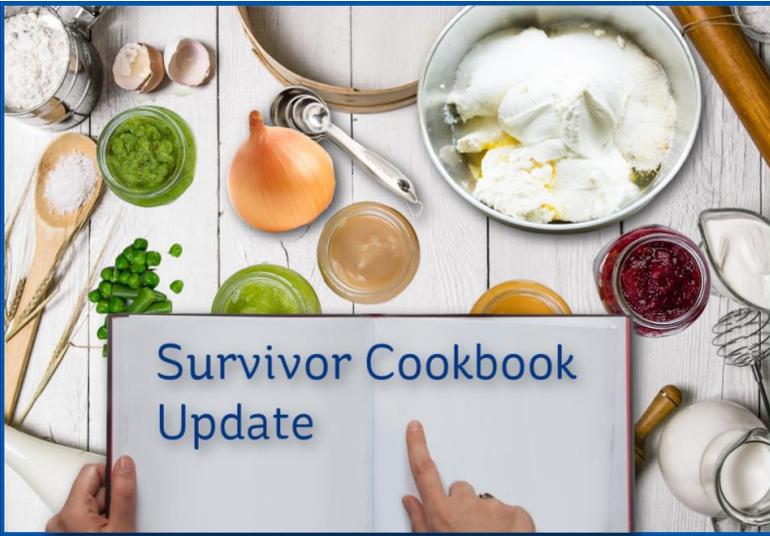
*"I see you when flowers bloom."*

*"Your smile lit up a room."*

We will post these throughout the day on Helpline's social media venues – Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Please stop by these sites (@helplinecenter) throughout the day to read the six-work stories submitted by other survivors.



There have been some wonderful submissions for “Soul Food: A Loving Collection of Food and Memories.”



We will continue to gather submissions until the Surviving After Suicide Loss Advisory Committee feels that we have enough to proceed with publishing.

This is a creative opportunity to remember your loved one and to share both their memory and their favorite food with those who purchase the cookbook. Anyone within our survivor community may contribute a recipe to the cookbook. **Anyone can purchase the cookbooks, but only survivors of suicide loss may submit a recipe and photo.**

Here's what we're looking for:

- A recipe of something that was a special favorite of your loved one.
- A photo of your loved one to accompany the recipe.
- A brief description of your memory of your loved one enjoying or making this food.

Recipes can be submitted at the publisher's portal at <https://www.createmycookbook.com/groups/DJb9cY5Hc>

Recipes can be from any category – main dishes, soups, desserts, side dishes, baked goods, etc. We will begin the printing and shipping process once we feel we have enough recipes to form a well-published cookbook.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Jennie Marks by email ([griefsupport@helplinecenter.org](mailto:griefsupport@helplinecenter.org)) or by phone at (605) 274-1416.

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### Ever Heard of Laughter Yoga?



This link was shared with me by a survivor who has found it beneficial in their healing: <https://youtu.be/4p4dZoafivk>.

Laughter yoga is a modern exercise involving prolonged voluntary laughter. This exercise is based on the belief that voluntary laughter provides similar physiological and psychological benefits as spontaneous laughter. You do not have to do traditional yoga poses. It's a “fake it 'til you make it” approach, but it releases healing endorphins and other brain chemicals that aid in promoting a feeling of well-being. Think of it as healing rather than hilarity. This and many other laughter yoga techniques and practices may be found by doing an internet or YouTube search.



# Helpline Center's Programs and Services for Survivors

- **Support Groups**

Our SAS meetings are held in an atmosphere that is warm, friendly, and nonjudgmental. Anyone who has lost a family member or friend is invited to attend, whether it is a recent loss or a loss that occurred many years ago. Feelings shared are kept confidential and discussed only within the confines of the group meeting. Thus, our SAS support groups provide a comfortable and non-threatening setting to share experiences and thoughts. There is no cost to attend, and no registration is required. You are welcome to attend at any time.

The **in-person support group** meets the **third Thursday of each month** from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the Helpline Center, 3817 S Elmwood Ave, Sioux Falls, SD. **Just for February 2022, the monthly in-person support group will be held on the fourth Thursday, which is February 24<sup>th</sup>.** Please note that this is the only change to the normal third-Thursday format.

Our **virtual support group**, which usually meets **the first Thursday of each month** from 7:00-8:30 p.m. online via Zoom, has been temporarily suspended. Stay tuned for updates!

- **Support Classes**

Our (SAS) Surviving After Suicide Support Classes are held in January, April, and September. These classes are held for 10 consecutive Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. and offer both education and support for adults who have lost a loved one to suicide. The class is designed to help survivors express and understand the powerful and unique grief they experience in a safe place with others who have also lost a loved one to suicide. The class is appropriate for those whose loss is recent and those who have been struggling with their grief for an extended period of time without support. There is no cost for the class or the materials, but registration is required. The venue of the class (in-person or online via Zoom) will be decided depending upon the preference of the participants. The next class will begin Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

- **Caring Cards**

Caring cards are sent out, with permission and by request, to survivors on the anniversary of their suicide loss. These cards are also included in the "Survivor's Packet" that is given to new survivors. Each special notecard is handmade by a fellow survivor and contains a handwritten message of support and remembrance of their loved one. If you do not currently receive a card on your loss anniversary and would like to, you may sign up on our website.

- **LOSS Program**

Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors works with local law enforcement, clergy, and funeral homes in the Sioux Empire area to provide a support visit, phone calls, or any other type of support that they can give to aid friends and family members in the wake of a recent suicide loss. The team is comprised exclusively of trained staff from the Helpline Center.

To register or learn more about these and other services, visit:

<https://www.helplinecenter.org/suicide-and-crisis-support/survivor-services>

