

## INSIDE

Welcome from the Chair 2

Guest Speaker Feb Support meeting - Grant Dewar 2


BTS Movie night 3

Articles - The New Year/ Questions/Hope 4 - 6

Poems/Quotations Additional Support Services 7



## Important Up-coming Events

 **Sunday 7th February – BTSSG Coffee Morning**

10am – 12.30pm Botanic Gardens Cafe (by the lake) Please note location.

All welcome. This is an opportunity to catch up with others who have lost someone to suicide, in a less formal setting than our regular monthly meetings. Join us for breakfast or coffee and cake while chatting and listening to others and then take a stroll through the beautiful surroundings of the Botanic Gardens. BTS volunteers will be on hand.

 **Wednesday 17th February – BTS Support Meeting. Special presentation.**

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 1 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide.

Presentation by Grant Dewar, Psychologist on Self-forgiveness from 7-8pm. Refreshments will be provided. See page 2 for more details.

 **BTS is proud to present - ‘The Lady in The Van’**

**Friday 11th March 2016 – BTS Movie Night Fund Raiser (change of date as shown in our last newsletter)**

6pm – 9pm Capri Theatre 141 Goodwood Rd, Goodwood

BTS invites you to join us at a film night to raise funds for the on-going provision of the services BTS provides to the bereaved through suicide community. We have organised for pre-movie drinks and nibbles from 6pm to be followed by a 15 minute recital on the Capri's famous organ. The movie will be shown from 7pm. Tickets only \$25. Tickets can be purchased by calling the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287 or email [support@bts.org.au](mailto:support@bts.org.au). See page 3 for more details.

**Wednesday 16th March – BTS support meeting**

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 1 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide.

**Wednesday 20th April – BTS support meeting**

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 1 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide.

 **Sunday 1st May – BTS coffee morning**

10am -12.30pm Cafe Fibonacci – located on the Schomburgh Terraced Pavilion

## A Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the first edition of the 2016 newsletter. I hope the last edition of the 2015 newsletter was able to give comfort and ways to cope with the grief and stress brought on by Christmas and New Year.

For those who attended the very moving BTS Christmas Remembrance Service, thank you for making it a most special night. The candle lighting ceremony was probably the most emotive evening I have attended. A special thanks to those who spoke at the Service and to the BTS committee for your organisation.

Our first coffee morning of the year is this Sunday the 7th February. These have become a regular event on the BTS calendar and we look forward to welcoming you to an informal, casual chat over coffee.

This year BTS is looking to have guest speakers at some of our support meetings. The first of these will be at our meeting on Wednesday 17th February. We are privileged to have Grant Dewar, a psychologist specialising in self-forgiveness. Grant experienced the loss of his father and a cousin to suicide.

As with many of us he struggled to find his path in life. Late in life he decided to undertake a course in psychology and found a path to forgiving himself. Grant will give a talk on his journey and offer some ways to begin the path to self-forgiveness. Further details right.

Finally on Friday 11th March we are having a fund-raising film night. We know many of you who attended the last film night thoroughly enjoyed yourself and asked about when the next one would be! Not only do you get to see a wonderful movie, you will also get nibbles, a drink, and a performance of the Capri's famous organ prior to the movie. This is the major fundraiser for BTS. We look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible. Details are on the opposite page. We look forward to seeing you at our events.

Kindest regards,

Tim Porter  
(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)

## Guest Speaker BTS February Support meeting - Grant Dewar

Hello. My name is Grant Dewar and I am a Health psychologist. My role is to help people to better identify, predict and engage in behaviours which will promote better psychological and physical health. I became a psychologist at 52 having enrolled in the fulltime degree at age 48.

My life experience includes my own experience of bereavement through suicide involving both my father and cousin; as a workplace safety advisor, supporting those bereaved by suicide and now as a health psychologist responding to those who have attempted self-harm and supporting through psychological therapy those affected by suicide.

This intervention is based on successful work with clients who have been affected by major life setbacks and who have made changes to actively engage with meaningful and purposeful responses to their setbacks and to build a life informed by their values.

The Intervention is based on the principles of self-forgiveness and assists people to:

- Identify the factors leading to being stuck in self-blame leading to anxiety (worry) and depression
- provide flexible responses to life, including more effective means of perspective taking and focussing on present moment experience
- undertake a values based analysis of their life
- provide a basis for compassionate response to shame, guilt, remorse and restoration
- build skills in acceptance and willingness
- undertake relapse prevention through self-compassion and self-respect
- Build trust in themselves - now I can trust myself to take valued life action.

I look forward to meeting you on the 17th of February.

# BTS Movie Night

Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group warmly invites you...

to attend the screening of *The Lady in the Van*  
(staring Maggie Smith and Alex Jennings)

Capri Theatre 141 Goodwood Road, Goodwood

Friday, 11th March.

Complimentary Drink and Nibbles in the foyer from 6.00 pm. Raffle on the night.

Organ 6.45 pm. **Movie 7.00 pm.**

TICKETS  
**\$25.00**  
EACH

## THE LADY IN THE VAN



For tickets phone - 0468 440 287, (08) 8332 8240 or email - [support@bts.org.au](mailto:support@bts.org.au)

Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group is a not for profit organisation that receives no government funding. Comprised entirely of volunteers, Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group exists to provide support and care to people grieving the loss of someone through suicide.

## Articles/letters - The new Year

### Points to ponder throughout the coming New Year:

- What meaning is there to be found in my loss?
- What lessons have you learned, or what can be learned from this experience?
- What self-discoveries are you making?
- What personal qualities have been strengthened as a result of this experience?
- What strengths can you identify that were not apparent before?
- What is becoming of the person you used to be? Who are you now?
- What was important to you before this loss, compared to what is important now?
- How has this experience impacted your values and spiritual beliefs?
- Do you see the world any differently now?

### Grief and Forgiveness: How To Start A New Year

I don't make New Year's resolutions any more. I see them as a recipe for failure. When my husband first died I bought a plaque that said, "Have An Adequate Day." It made me laugh - but I also felt it was something I could live up to. I don't like setting expectations for myself that I might not meet. A lot of life coaches would disagree with me on this. I find it works better to have a gratitude list and a forgiveness list.

The gratitude list contains the things I am grateful for that happened last year. It forces me to look at the good things that happen to me instead of just employing my excellent skill set for self pity. The forgiveness list contains things that I would like to accomplish but haven't yet. They are kind of upside down resolutions. I forgive myself for not achieving goals I might have with the hope that perhaps I will achieve them the next year. But if I don't - they just go back on the forgiveness list. There is no judgement list.

Living without my husband is hurtful in so many ways that I try not to hurt myself any more than I already am. That means accepting myself where I am. When I can't do that - I usually talk to someone who will tell me that they love me. I have a friend I met on a grief site that has the uncanny ability to e-mail me and tell me how special I am and how much she loves me just when the dark place has grabbed hold of me and I am thinking that nobody loves me and I am worthless. Her e-mail shatters the dark place and lets the light back in.

I am grateful for family and friends. I am grateful for all of you who are with me on this strange and unwanted journey. I am grateful I seem to be gifted in some way to bring comfort to those who are suffering.

I am grateful for many more things. Good plays, good TV shows. A good joke, a bad pun. A good political discussion. I try to look outward every day to see what is outside me that I am grateful for instead of inward at my grief and my pain. Those questions. What else? Who else? I must keep asking it so my gratitude list grows every longer.

On my forgiveness list? Still haven't written the book - still haven't given myself a healthy fit body. All those moments staring at nothing. All the frozen moments, the unappreciated wishing I was with my husband moments. I would like to be healthier - I would feel better and have more energy. I would like to write a book - maybe. Would I like to have a new relationship? - that one is still firmly in the I don't know place.

I don't know what the new year will bring. I know it won't bring my husband back to me. I will have to keep finding ways to live with that. I hope, though, that the balance will continue to shift so I continue to have more productive moments and more happy moments. I hope that the pain will continue to gentle down and I will feel less vulnerable, less irritated by life.

Each day brings me closer to my husband - but it is up to me not to wish those days away but to live them

Perhaps that is what I would like for all of us this new year - to not wish our days and nights away - but to live them fully. To hold on if we want - and let go if we want. To let love raise us above the pain so that we see things ever in new ways. Not a new year - but a new day - one at a time. A day in which we delight in things past - but also in things present.

Jan Warner (Abridged)

## Questions we ask ourselves

### Those who have been bereaved by suicide are often haunted by two questions:

- **Why did they do it?**
- **Could I have done something to prevent it?**

The sad truth is that we can never really know the complete answer, as the only person who could tell us is the person who died. They might not even have really understood themselves.

These questions are a normal part of the journey as we try to make sense of what has happened. We might each have our own thoughts or insights however we rarely have all the pieces of the picture. Eventually you may find that you can settle on an answer that you can live with or that you can live with not knowing. Always know that help is available and there are people who can support you through this difficult journey.

“After a while, the pauses between you asking yourself the questions get a bit bigger. You might stop thinking about it for a minute, then an hour, then a day and so on. It is always there but it does get less”

#### **Why did they do it?**

When a person ends their own life, it is usually the result of many factors and circumstances and not the result of a single incident. Only the person who died understood all of the “why’s” and how they fit together.

There may have been some clues about what may have led them to take their life for; example if they had a history of depression or mental ill health. There may have been previous suicide attempts. Or there might not have been any indication that anything was wrong – indeed to the outside world it appeared that everything was normal and they had everything to live for.

Some people leave a suicide note though this is not as common as people think. Even if a note is left, it may not provide answers – it may be unclear what the words intended, there may be multiple interpretations or it may simply be impossible to comprehend and accept.

You may wonder if they actually meant to take their life. Were they simply making a cry for help that went too far? Were they actually aware of what they were doing, did they make a conscious choice?

“Over the years, I have changed my mind so many times about why I thought Sarah did what she did. Different answers have felt more comforting or helpful at different times. I know that I will never know the true answer – all I can do is work with what makes most sense to me in the moment”

Know that asking why is normal and that at first it may feel impossible that you will ever get beyond that question – but eventually you will find a way of thinking that you can accept or live with. Many people find that talking with others who share something of your experience helps them to reach this place.

#### **Could I have done something to prevent it?**

Guilt and self reproach are very common reactions when someone takes their own life – we all wonder if we could have somehow prevented it. It is one of the most difficult struggles for those bereaved by suicide – especially at first.

You may wonder if you missed the signs, that perhaps you were not attentive enough to what was happening. They may have hidden things from you. You may find yourself worrying why they didn’t feel that they could come to you.

If there were indications, you may feel guilty that you didn’t do more. A common experience is that they may have appeared to be getting better, for example they had a positive lift in mood and energy, in the period before they died. This is thought to be because the person experiences calm once they have made their decision to end their life.

Blaming yourself is a common reaction but potentially damaging to your health in the long term. The difficult truth is that we cannot be responsible for what happened, no matter how close we are or how much we love people. It is important that you get support and have people that you can talk to.

“I have learned to live with a contradiction – logically, practically I know now and I accept that I couldn’t have prevented it. But I still feel guilty. Emotionally, I still feel that I should have been able to do something, that I let her down.”

(SOBS UK)

## Article on Hope

### Postvention is ultimately about hope and about re-establishing hope in a person, a community or workplace that has been devastated by a suicide

Postvention is ultimately about hope, about re-establishing hope in a person and a community or workplace that has been devastated by a suicide

Hope In this confusing and often lonely journey we call suicide grief, there is one aspect that sustains us and guides us, although much of the time it feels hidden from us. Hope. It is hope that keeps us forging forward. Hope helps us to know deep down somewhere inside of us we will one day feel good again. What we each define as hope will vary among us, but the most important part is that we all know it is there. Hope is what life ultimately is about.

For some of us, there is hope that we will see our loved one again in another life, for others it's feeling the presence of our loved one in some way in our life. And yet for others it's the sense that we will find purpose in our lives again.

To have hope in our lives, we also have smaller symbols of hope that sustain us in times of sadness and difficulty. This symbol can be as basic as the sun rising in the morning. There is hope in seeing the sun come up, in seeing a new day with a clean slate. While some people might find dread in a new day, the ultimate comfort is knowing that we have a chance to have another opportunity at a new day.

Other symbols of hope in our lives can be children, pets, material objects— whatever is important to us in our lives that we grasp when we are in pain and need something to give us relief. For some people, reaching out to others through suicide prevention advocacy, helping people grieve a suicide loss, or in another helpful manner is a way to find hope again.

From *What are the emotions of suicide grief?*  
By Michelle Linn-Gust, Ph.D.



# Poems/Quotations & Additional Support Services

## Hope...

I don't know for sure that things will get better. All I have is hope.

- Anon

.....

Cling to hope! Even when we don't feel it, hope is there. In the midst of losing our loved one, hope helps us to see what is ahead and to look to the future rather than being stuck in the present and past

- Anon

.....

Hope - Accept that you will never be the same again. But this does not mean that you will never enjoy life again. You can, and you will.

- Anon

.....

Hope is a thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all.

- Emily Dickinson

## For Both of Us... by Sascha

As long as I can,  
I will look at this world for both of us.  
As long as I can,  
I will laugh with the birds,  
I will sing with the flowers,  
I will pray to the stars,  
For the both of us.  
As long as I can,  
I will remember how many things  
On this earth were your joy.  
And I will live as well  
As you would want me to live  
As long as I can.

(Sascha's daughter Eve died by suicide at age 21.)  
Reprinted from Suicide Bereavement Support, Metanoia  
Peace Community, Portland



## Donations

Without donations, BTS would not be able to continue supporting the Bereaved Through Suicide community. 100% of all donations received are used to continue supporting people bereaved through suicide.

Should you wish to make a tax deductible donation to BTS please contact us or donations can be sent to:  
PO Box 15, Hindmarsh SA 5007.

Tax deductible receipts will be issued.

[Living Beyond Suicide \(LBS\)](#) between 10am–10pm any day.

Phone 1300 76 11 93

[Minimisation Of Suicide Harm \(MOSH\)](#)

Phone: (08) 8443 8369

[Kids Helpline](#)

Phone: 1800 55 1800

[Lifeline](#)

Phone: 13 11 14

[Beyondblue](#)

Phone: 1300 22 4636

[Mensline](#)

Phone: 1300 789 978

[Suicide Call Back Service](#)

Phone: 1300 659 467

The Suicide Call Back Service is a professional, national, 24/7 counselling service for anyone affected by suicide.