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Sometimes I touch the things you used to touch looking for echoes of your fingers...

Important Up-coming Events

Wednesday 17th August – BTS Support Meeting. Guest presentation

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Adel. Market.

Presentation by Dr. Sheila Clark (author of After Suicide: Help for the Bereaved) Topic: Towards Healing

How can we heal from the brokenness of a suicide loss? How can we deal with the painful thoughts and feelings and gain some peace? How can we put our lives together and find a purposeful and fulfilling future for ourselves? In this session we shall focus on some new understandings in neuroscience, grief and trauma psychology and philosophy that help us to understand how we can heal. We will try out some of these new ideas and develop strategies to take away and that we can build on at home. BTS looks forward to welcoming you to this presentation

Wednesday 17th August 2016 - BTS Annual General Meeting

6pm-6.45pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Adel. Market.

BTS invites all its members to attend the AGM which will be followed by light refreshments. The monthly support meeting will follow. See pages 2 and 8 for more details. We need your support. We have a couple of retirements and need new faces to fill their roles.

BTS Calendar

Sunday 7th August – BTS coffee morning

10am -12.30pm Botanic Gardens - Cafe by the lake (inside for winter)

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 August – BTS Annual General meeting

6pm-7pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Adel. Market.

Wednesday 17th August - BTS Support Meeting

6.45pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Adel. Market.

Special presentation by Dr Sheila Clark on the topic of 'Towards Healing'. See 'Important Up-coming events' above.

Wednesday 21st September - BTS Support Meeting

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Adel. Market.

Wednesday 19th October - BTS Support Meeting

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Adel. Market.

Sunday 6th November – BTS Coffee Morning

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

A Welcome from the Chair

Each time I sit to write this column, I reflect over the previous 3 months support meetings. I think of those people that I have met and how they are coping with the after effect of someone close taking their own life.

There is no formula for overcoming the grief and trauma, rather it is the love and support of those around us that allows us to slowly wind our way through the myriad of feelings and find our feet again.

I was reminded recently of how much just 'being there' can provide comfort in times of need. At our recent support meeting one of the attendees read out a letter she had written, a letter to all her unseen friends, about the importance of allowing us to move at our own pace, to listen and to just 'be there'. Everyone at the meeting sat silently, nodding at these words. If only the world could be a kinder place.

I know that having people who know our story and still listen and are 'there' has been a huge support in our journey, now 6 years long. I also know that being able to give support, by just being 'there', can make a big difference to one's life. In these times of technological change where there never seems to be enough time, everything is in haste and last minute, our phones a constant companion. Next time you are 'there' for a friend try turning your phone off, listen to their words and give them your support.

Kindest regards,

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)

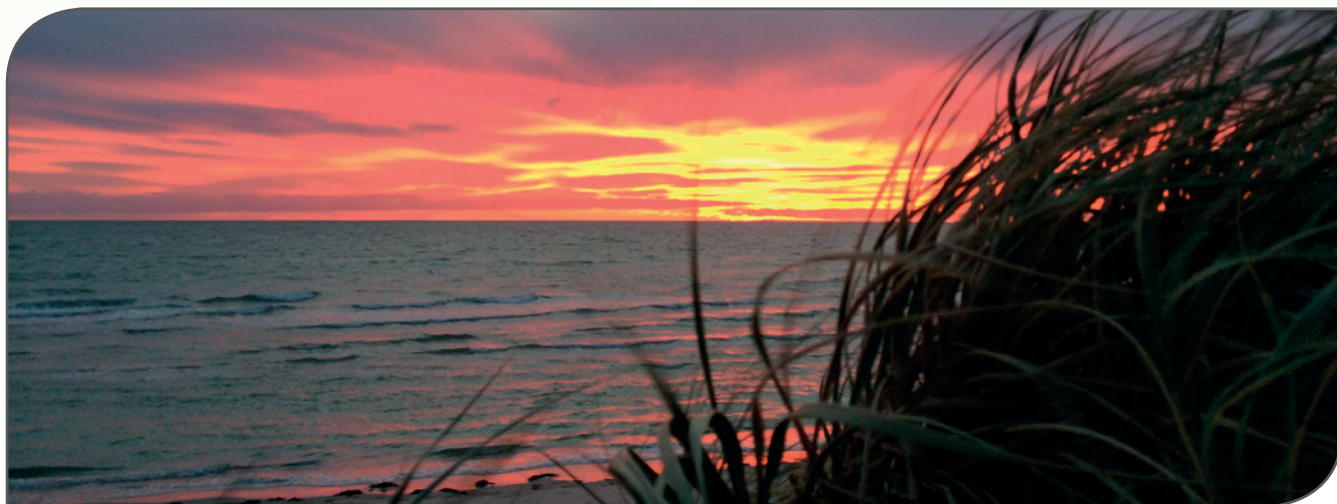
BTS AGM

On Wednesday, 17th August, at 6pm we will be holding our Annual General Meeting prior to our support meeting. The AGM is not only a statutory requirement of our being an incorporated body and an association in law, but also an important renewal of our structure and organisation.

Any group or organisation only operates, flourishes and grows as a consequence of the willingness of it's members to contribute to it's welfare. The health of any organisation is only a product of the goodwill and support that it receives from volunteers and workers who are prepared to pitch in and work for the common good.

If you feel that you'd be willing to have a go, to pitch in and help, then you'd be very welcome to join the Committee. So fill in the form on page 8 (the current committee can act as nominator and seconder) or call BTS on 0468 440 287 to discuss.

Not only the other members of the Committee, but indeed everyone in the BTS community, would be very grateful for your contribution.



August Support Meeting - Special Presentation

On the 17th August, BTS is pleased to have Dr. Sheila Clark give a talk on "Towards Healing".

Dr. Sheila Clark has worked extensively as a grief counsellor, been a founding board member of Postvention Australia and sits on the professional advisory council of the Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group. She is a practising general practitioner and a university lecturer.

Dr. Clark has been closely involved with BTS for many years and has a great understanding of the impact of suicide on those left behind.

The talk will look at such questions as:

How can we heal from the brokenness of a suicide loss? How can we deal with the painful thoughts and feelings and gain some peace? How can we put our lives together and find a purposeful and fulfilling future for ourselves?

Dr. Clark will focus on some new understandings in neuroscience, grief and trauma psychology and philosophy that will hopefully help us to understand how we can heal.

As we need to cater for the event could you please call/text 0468 440 287 or email support@bts.org.au and advise if you will be attending.



Dr. Sheila Clark

BTS NOTICE OF AGM:

**Wednesday 17th August, 6pm at
Way Hall, level 3, Uniting Communities,
Pitt St, Adelaide.**

... All welcome

Letters and Father's Day poems

I miss you Cameron...

Hi,

My name is Graeme and I miss my youngest son, Cameron, - still - after 29 years.

Way back in 1987 our lovable, bright, companionable, good looking youngest child had hit a brick wall which only he could see.

We will never know what built that wall or why Cam couldn't see the holes and cracks that could help him climb over it. Hindsight allows us to surmise, to pretend we know, to think we should have seen the problems! Hindsight can be a very cruel mistress.

We did what we did at the time knowing what we knew, at the time. We whipped ourselves, we blamed ourselves mainly for his suicide. And then we were introduced to the fledgling BTSSG and the lifeline it can provide.

The group made us realise several things. There were unquestioning shoulders to cry on. There was a safe place to let go of those tightly held emotions, with others who totally understood why you howled and then laughed as something bright went through your mind. Who understood that it's OK to not want to talk sometimes and why you can't shut up other times.

The first few years are tough as the memories are so fresh you can smell them. Then slowly came the understanding that Cameron would certainly not want us to remember him with sadness and gloom but rather to revel in the wonderful times we did have together, all 17 years of his life.

We still wonder what he would be doing at 46.

And it still hurts but it's bearable now.

A Day, a Week, a Lifetime

When I wake up in the morning,

I ask myself, How will I get through this day **Without You?**

As I dress and prepare to start my day, I wonder, how will I go on **Without You?**

As the day slowly slips away,
I remember how you made me laugh

And I smile **Without You.**

At the end of the day, As I prepare to close my eyes, I know in my heart I couldn't have gotten through the day **Without You.**

- Author Unknown

I miss you Dad

I miss you Dad and I hope I make you proud dad,

Even though you're no longer here,
Your memory grows stronger, with every passing year,

At the end it was a battle, one you weren't to win,
A fight against a demon, no choice but to give in,

I wish I could've said goodbye, that morning when you left,
Told you, you were my hero, and that you were the best,

Tears I cry in secret, at night before I sleep,
Wishing you were beside me, you'd be forever here to keep,

The years don't make it easier, they said the pain would go,
It seems I've just got better, not letting my feelings show,

Wishing I could hold your hand, to shout your name aloud,
You're no longer here dad, but I hope I make you proud.

- Author Unknown



Supporting children and young adults

It is important that children and young adults who have been bereaved by suicide receive support and care as they understand what has happened and grieve for their loss. It can feel difficult to know what to do for the best – our protective instincts mean that we want to avoid causing them further pain. The task may be made harder by your own grief and the fear that you will not be able to say the right things or be able to understand and meet your child's needs.

In this article you can find out more about:

- Talking with children
- Changes in Behaviour
- Returning to school or college
- The funeral and viewing the body
- How it can affect you as a parent

Talking with children

When children learn that someone decided to die, similar problems of comprehension arise as they do for adults; questions that are difficult when a death is “natural” or even caused by another become even more difficult and painful to answer when the death is by suicide – “how did it happen?” or “why?”. You may also fear that by talking about the suicide that you are putting frightening ideas into their heads.

Telling the truth

Honesty is widely recognised to be the best approach. This does not mean giving every detail but gently providing enough information, in a language that they understand to enable them to understand what has happened and to ask the questions that they need to.

Children need to know that they can trust us. You may be tempted to hide the truth, perhaps because you think it will be better for them or because it is too painful for you to share. But it is often difficult to keep the truth hidden and it may be revealed later, perhaps in an insensitive or thoughtless way – possibly even in the playground.

It may also be tempting to try and convince children that they had a different experience to reality – for example that they didn't see the paramedics, that they imagined it – because we want to try and protect them. But this can be confusing for the child and may mean that they avoid talking about how they are feeling.

Children are likely to experience new worries after a suicide – fear that others will leave them, fear that suicide runs in the family, fear that it was their fault. They need to be supported and reassured by people they trust – and a lack of honesty, however well intended, could damage their confidence in you.

How much to tell them?

This will depend on the individual child and circumstances surrounding the death. You will probably need to explain what has happened in stages, being patient with them as they understand at their own pace. You may need to repeat certain conversations, possibly over the course of many months or years as the child reflects, thinks and develops.

Don't assume that silence means that they don't have questions,

thoughts or feelings. It may be difficult but you may need to create some opportunities for them to talk about their emotions and fears. They may also avoid talking because they are worried about upsetting you – you need to create a space where you can make this okay and you can grieve together.

One of the most important things to help your child understand is that it was not their fault and that they are in no way to blame for what happened.

How much will they understand?

Children as young as two often have some understanding of death but don't necessarily understand that they are “gone forever” until around the age of five. They may expect the person who died to come back sometime – and as the period of absence increases, so does the child's feeling of insecurity.

From the ages of five to nine, children may have a clearer understanding that death is forever but may struggle to understand that this can happen to them and their family. Older children and young adults will understand that death is irreversible and may have a greater awareness of the circumstances surrounding the death. They will try to cope with events and face some of the similar challenges to adults.

Changes in Behaviour

Children will react and cope differently but be prepared for some changes in their Behaviour as they try to adapt to what has happened. They may feel many of the same emotions and reactions as adults do – grief, anger, anxiety, guilt – and may try different ways to find security or seek attention. For example they may become clingy, revert to baby speak, hide or run away, withdraw to their room, behave aggressively or copy behaviours of the dead person. Sometimes you may be hurt or frustrated by their Behaviour but it is important to remember that they are doing it to try and find a way to cope. Be patient and do what you can to make them feel safe.

The funeral and viewing the body

You should talk with your children about the funeral and opportunities to view the body – let them know what will be happening and what choices they can make. Reassure them that whatever choice they make is okay.

For some children attending the funeral or seeing the body can be an important step in understanding and coming to terms with the death. Help them to understand what to expect and agree how you will support them so that they know they will be safe. If they do decide to attend, you may wish to talk with the funeral director, the person leading the funeral or other relatives and friends so that they can also be supportive.

“I wanted to see him to make his death seem real to me. And knowing my imagination, I thought what I imagined might be much worse than what he actually looked like. I didn't want to be left with a terrible picture that wasn't real”

Returning to school

Children may face a number of challenges when they return to school. They may struggle to concentrate in class, homework may be difficult and some topics may be challenging for them. Worst of all they may need to cope with thoughtless or malicious comments from other children. This will be made even worse if you have not been truthful about what happened.

It helps if you can talk with the school staff about what has happened and share with your child what you have told them so that they know. Some schools may have a specific teacher who provides bereavement support. Agree with your child what they should do if they have any concerns whilst they are at school to give them reassurance that they will be safe.

How it can affect you as a parent

It is natural to worry about your children after a suicide, in particular if the person who died was one of your children. You may lose some confidence in your parenting abilities. You may become over protective or excessively anxious about them. These are normal reactions and you should look for support in raising your family – you are not alone. Partners, family and friends can be a great source of support and there are number of organisations who can connect you with others who have been in similar situations.

It is important to remember that we all react, grieve and cope differently and whilst it may seem to you that they are not responding to what has happened, they may simply be finding their own way of dealing with the situation. In particular it can be difficult to support adolescents, a time when communication and relationships are often already strained in normal circumstances.

<http://www.supportaftersuicide.org.au/understanding-suicide-and-grief/young-people-and-grief>



Young People and Grief

Grief is a universal experience. It is a natural response to a loss. However, it can also be a difficult experience particularly during adolescence when there are a great deal of other changes occurring.

At a Glance

During adolescence, grief has the potential to accelerate or inhibit development.

Young people can be often feel confused and overwhelmed by the range of feelings they are experiencing.

Grief is expressed in many ways. There is no wrong or right way to grieve. There is no specific timeline.

Many young people feel conflicted about seeking support from their parents as they're also striving for independence.

Adolescence is an important transitional phase. It is an exciting and complex stage of the life span. Behavioural, social, cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual development and growth are in rapid process.

Understanding and grappling with issues related to identity, independence and peers takes on a natural urgency for young people during this time. Coming to an awareness and acceptance of one's changing body and mind and pushing the boundaries to experiment with dress, hairstyles, peer groups, drugs and alcohol are a part of working out belonging and values.

Grief is a universal experience. It is a natural response to a loss. However, it can also be a difficult experience particularly during adolescence when there are a great deal of other changes occurring.

Grief is a process that each person experiences in a unique way. The following factors influence how grief is experienced:

- What was the relationship with the person who died?
- What are the circumstances surrounding the death?
- How has emotional distress been managed in the past?
- What is the support network?

During adolescence, grief has the potential to accelerate or inhibit development. Young people can often feel overwhelmed and confused by the intensity and range of feelings they are experiencing. Their limited life experience may not prepare them to handle intense feelings in safe ways.

Many young people feel conflicted about seeking support from their parents as they are also striving for independence. They may feel alienated from peers and struggle to concentrate at school. These factors can create vulnerability, which may lead to isolation, confusion and increased risk-taking behaviour.

Common Grief Responses

Behavioural

Tears, intolerance of others, mood changes, disjointed conversations, resentment, restlessness, erratic decision making.

Social

Isolation, withdrawal, abusing drugs/alcohol, risk-taking Behaviour.

Cognitive

Confusion, sense of unreality, forgetfulness, racing mind, poor concentration.

Emotional

Numbness, sadness, anxiety, guilt, fear, helplessness, mood changes.

Physical

Change in appetite, change in sleeping, tiredness, headaches, colds, nausea.

Spiritual

Why me?, loss of meaning, questioning faith, challenging beliefs, desolation, searching for understanding.

Ways of Supporting a Bereaved Young Person

- Don't put a limit on the process of healing. Be available some time down the track.
- Sit quietly with the young person while he/she talks, cries or is silent.
- Make opportunities to share memories or look at photos of the person who has died.
- Acknowledge and believe the young person's pain and distress whatever the loss - large or small.
- Be aware of your own grief and/or feeling of helplessness.
- Reassure the person that grief is a normal response to loss and there is no wrong or right way to grieve.
- Don't panic in the absence or presence of strong emotional responses.

Living with the Experience of Grief

The following are some creative ways which may assist in living with the experience of grief:

- Write a letter to the person who has died or make a card and add a message
- Create images that express something of your experience - have a go at using clay or paints, do a drawing or make a collage
- Make a CD of songs that are meaningful
- Talk to people who have known the person who has died
- Make a memory book about the person who has died. Include photos, poems, sketches, qualities, sayings, stories
- Prepare for special days and holidays. Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries can be difficult times. Plan a visit to the cemetery, light a candle or maybe spend some time at the deceased person's favourite place. Keep a journal. Fill it with your thoughts and memories. Take time to reflect on your journey.

BTS Support Group Inc. Committee Nomination

Nominations are invited for the election of Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc. Committee and office bearers. Your nomination can be proposed by existing committee members.

Nomination (Please Print Clearly)

I, (name of member proposing)

Phone (h).....(M)Email

and I (name of member seconding)

Phone (h).....(M)Email

Nominate (name of nominee)

For the position of: (circle one) **Management Committee Member / Chair / Vice Chair / Treasurer / Secretary**

Nominator Date

Seconder Date

Nomination Acceptance

I (nominee)accept the nomination as indicated above

Nominee's signature Date.....

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 you can directly EFT to: **BTS Support Group BSB: 633-000 A/C: 148312366** or donations can be sent to: PO Box 15, Hindmarsh SA 5007. Tax deductible receipts will be issued.



A big thank you to Graphic Print Group for their ongoing print support.

Additional Support Services

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

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

[Kids Helpline](#)

[Lifeline](#)

[Beyondblue](#)

[Mensline](#)

[Suicide Call Back Service](#)

Phone 1300 76 11 93

Phone: (08) 8443 8369

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Phone: 13 11 14

Phone: 1300 22 4636

Phone: 1300 789 978

Phone: 1300 659 467

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