

Hope

Hope gently whispers
To the broken heart
That still beats
To the rhythm of love and memories
Forever missing
Forever changed

Tanya Lord

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Calendar of events

Sunday 5th February - BTS Coffee Morning

10am -12.30pm Botanic Gardens - Cafe Fibonacci – located on the Schomburgk Terraced Pavilion. 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 15th February - BTS Support Meeting.

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Care Park, 15 Pitt St (directly opposite)
The support meetings are for those bereaved through suicide and are facilitated by trained support workers who have themselves been bereaved through suicide. The meeting offers the opportunity to express your loss in an environment that is caring and safe. Everything shared is treated as strictly confidential. The meetings not only provide the opportunity to share experiences, they also present information about the process of loss and grief and strategies to heal. We look forward to welcoming you.

Wednesday 15th March - BTS Support Meeting.

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Care Park, 15 Pitt St (directly opposite)

Thursday 23rd - Saturday 25th March - 5th Australian Postvention Conference.

University of New South Wales. Details page 3.

Wednesday 19th April - BTS Support Meeting.

7pm-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Care Park, 15 Pitt St (directly opposite)

Sunday 7th May - BTS Coffee Morning

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

A Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the first edition for 2017.

As I sit down to write my page for each newsletter I reflect on the events that have taken place since the last edition. These events shape our lives, change who we are, alter our perspective on life in general. Some of these are of such magnitude, such as the loss of someone who has taken their own life, that they are traumatic, life altering events. In the early days whilst we struggle to understand the event itself, little do we realise the immense change that our bodies go through, how our physiology changes. We may think we are OK, we may lock things away, but inevitably at some point in time we have to address those changes. Recently I have met people who have lost someone some 3, 4, 5 years ago (and a lot longer) and are only starting to look for resolution of the changes that have taken place within themselves. This has seen an immense struggle in these people in trying to come to grips with understanding these changes. Some people are able to do this on their own but most need the support and care of a network of people that may include family, close friends, support network, doctors, psychiatrist, psychologist and social workers. This journey can be long, arduous, draining and have many 'ups and downs' but with the right support and understanding one can find that whilst their world as they knew it has changed, they can find ways to live in their new world. This makes being involved with Bereaved Through Suicide a worthwhile undertaking. As a friend said to me many years ago 'Give to give, not give to get' and this is something many of us can undertake in our daily lives.

The Bereaved Through Suicide committee and volunteers conducted a Bunning's sausage sizzle in early January in 41°C heat to raise funds for the on-going running costs of the organisation. The day was a success not only for the money raised but in raising the awareness of suicide, mental health and the need to provide support to those bereaved through suicide. A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped out on the day.

In order to raise funds to allow BTS to maintain and grow its support to the bereaved community we will be holding a film fund raiser and another sausage sizzle later in the year. If people would like to volunteer, send an email or give us a call. It is only a few hours and is for a very worthy cause.

Finally our first morning tea in the Botanical Gardens is to be held on Sunday 5th February. We look forward to welcoming you to what has now become a regular quarterly event in a very relaxed environment.

May you all travel safely and take care of yourself and those around you.

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)



5TH AUSTRALIAN POSTVENTION CONFERENCE 2017



5th Australian Postvention Conference

- John Niland Scientia Building, University of NSW
- March 23, 2017 — March 25, 2017
- 09:00 am — 05:00 pm

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

This conference brings together those bereaved by suicide; trauma victims and survivors, indigenous, military personnel, emergency services and individuals/organisations working the field of suicide bereavement, trauma and loss.

A separate stream is dedicated to those bereaved by suicide, trauma victims and survivors. A healing and remembrance service will also be held at the conclusion of that day. The healing and remembrance service provides an opportunity for individuals, families, friends and conference delegates to come together in helping the bereaved through their pain of grief.

The Hope and Healing – “Suicide grief is different” Conference provides a wonderful opportunity for delegates throughout Australia and New Zealand and the South Pacific to network and share together their experience and knowledge.

We are privileged to have international guests and invited Australian speakers who are well known in Australia and internationally for their research and expertise in postvention, trauma and bereavement.

We look forward to you joining us for the 5th Australian Postvention Conference in March 2017, this is a conference you should not miss!

Yours sincerely,

Alan Staines (Envoy) OAM, OF - Chair, Conference Organising Committee
National Secretary, Postvention Australia – the National Association for the Bereaved by Suicide

www.5thpostventionconference2017.com.au

“Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness.

It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love.

The only cure for grief is to grieve.”

Earl Grollman

“Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,
love leaves a memory no one can steal.”

From a headstone in Ireland

“There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.”

Washington Irving



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION FOR THE BEREAVED

THIS YEAR I VOW TO...

Allow and honour all my feelings

- Not to judge myself or my feelings
- Not to utter or think any rules or "shoulds"

Listen to my heart

- To enter that still, sure place within where peace survives
- To trust my inner voice

Treat myself like a precious child

- To be gentle and compassionate toward myself
- To be kind and forgiving toward myself
- To reassure myself I am doing the best I can in this moment

Give myself whatever time I need to grieve,

- whenever I need it

Allow myself the relief from isolation, comparisons, and judgment

- Find support from someone who will be with me just as I am

Trust my body to know how to grieve, and

- then let it

Allow love to flow to me from my community

- from family who may not have understood me
- from unexpected people who surround me
- from a friend to sit with me, hold me, and comfort my mind/body/and soul

To find miracles in the most ordinary of things and events each day

- a sunrise, a hummingbird, the wet nose of a dog, a child pumping on a swing
- I will see and even feel wonder and beauty in the world without the guilt or despair that I am enjoying it without my loved one

To take one deep breath after another, and

- trust my resilience and ability to be with all my feelings

To hold on to the love, and

- not let death end my relationship with my loved one

SOURCE: <http://www.healingthespirit.org/new-years-resolution-bereaved/>



We can watch the news on television; we can listen to our radio or read it on our computers. All the news about the negativity of our world is thrown at us all day, every day. We are exposed to bombings, terrorists, murders, flashbacks to other traumas and tragedies, revisiting past traumatic news stories, fear, violence, gun control and suicide death statistics. And what do we do?

- We can choose whether we watch television or read the newspapers
- We can choose to refuse to admit, watch or listen to the negativity. (but this ultimately gives it power over you so that is another story and another post!)
- We can choose to empathise with the victims and feel compassion
- We can choose to allow our passion to move us
- We can choose to let love and light guide us
- We can choose how we are going to react
- We can choose to trust our faith
- We can choose to move ourselves to operate from our higher self

We clearly have choices. There are different perspectives and we can choose ours. How?

You can choose what you want to give your focus to. Choose. Choose what you CAN do. Honor and care for each other... Smile... Say thank you... Let the person ahead of you in line... Hold the door for someone... Help the elderly with a task... Give a compliment... Be courteous and polite... Say hello... Offer help to others... Be a good listener... Start a conversation with someone... Give someone an unexpected gift... to name a few...

I realise this post sounds quite repetitious but in grief we tend to lose our focus, feel out of control and feel an inability to decide anything. In life (not just grief) you can look from a different perspective. You can choose love where, when and with whom you want to share it. You can focus on love and not the negativity and fear that abounds in our world.

Do you want to feed the reactive emotions or create positive ones? Do you want to let go of the negativity?

We each have the wisdom, passion, love and light inside of us to adopt a different focus. We each have the ability to choose love.

I don't believe negativity will be abolished in my lifetime and with improving technology we will continue to be bombarded with disturbing world events and shocking news. So it is up to us to determine if we want to continue the loop of the familiar (fear) reaction or be a part of the creation of change in our world.

By being aware and changing your focus, you will be a part of the goodness in the world. Also, while you are learning to face your own challenges, you will be demonstrating goodness, love, and hope and healing to others.

Wishing you courage to choose...

Sometimes it's the smallest decisions that can change your life forever. **Keri Russell**

GRIEF IS OK

IT'S OKAY TO GRIEVE:

The death of a loved one is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without any anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed, and that somehow our dear one returned. Such hurt!! It's okay to grieve.

IT'S OKAY TO CRY:

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to "level off" and continue our cruise along the stream of life. It's okay to cry.

IT'S OKAY TO HEAL:

We do not need to "prove" we loved him or her. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel "guilty", for this is not an indication that we love less. It means that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death. It's a healthy sign of healing. It's okay to heal.

IT'S OKAY TO LAUGH:

Laughter is not a sign of "less" grief. Laughter is not a sign of "less" love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh again. It's okay to laugh.

www.survivorsof suicide.com

DEPRESSION VS COMPLICATED GRIEF

Depression is a constant feeling of negativity that stems from a chemical imbalance in the brain. There are many types of depression, and someone with depression may feel the symptoms briefly or over many years. Emotional influences like stress don't cause depression, but they can intensify it. Depression is often treated with medication and therapy.

Complicated grief (CG), on the other hand, is caused by the death of someone close to you. CG, sometimes called persistent complex bereavement disorder, is much stronger than normal grief. Many people go through several stages of grieving after losing a loved one. With CG, you may have trouble moving on for months, years, or more. You may also find yourself avoiding social contact, losing motivation to do daily tasks, or wishing that you had died, too. If you feel these things after losing a loved one, you may need to see your doctor to talk about treatment for your CG.

What Is complicated grief?

CG has many different descriptions. The most common one is that it's acute grief that causes long periods of suffering after losing a loved one. Many doctors believe that it's related to adjustment disorder, which happens when you show a long and intense response to a stressor. Many doctors are now discovering that CG has many features of a disorder. Doctors once avoided giving treatment to people who were grieving. Grief has long been considered a personal, non-medical struggle. However, new evidence shows that CG can make you feel worthless and suicidal, which is similar to depression. Because of this, doctors now seek to treat complicated grief like a disorder, suggesting therapies and treatments to lessen the draining hurt of grief.

No exact number exists for how many people have or have had CG. According to a study, between 10 to 20 percent of people who grieve have severe enough symptoms to be thought of as having CG.

How CG differs from depression

Unlike CG, depression is a clinical disorder that starts in the brain. Many different types of depression exist. Major depressive disorder (MDD) is one of the most recognizable. MDD has symptoms that can last for years and can interfere with your daily life. Another type of depression is psychotic depression, which is depression with psychosis. This can cause hallucinations, for example. Another type of depression is postpartum depression, which happens when you have depression after giving birth. Depression can also happen as a result of grief. Depression symptoms can worsen after an event like the death of a loved one. The symptoms of depression and grief can overlap, but they're treated in different ways.

Causes of Complicated Grief

CG is most commonly caused by the death of someone you love. If your significant other or a close family member dies suddenly, you may have trouble accepting your loss. You may feel intense sadness for years. Your relationships with friends, family, and co-workers may suffer. You may even completely withdraw from your personal and professional life.

CG doesn't have any identified biological causes. Like depression, it may happen because of:

- genetics
- body chemistry
- personality
- your environment

Symptoms of complicated grief

Grieving is a normal process. However, it can worsen your quality of life and involve more serious symptoms when it lasts for a long time. These symptoms can include:

- a powerful pain when you think of your lost loved one
- a heightened focus on reminders of your lost loved one
- an overall feeling of numbness
- a feeling of bitterness when you think about your loss
- a loss of purpose or motivation
- a loss of trust in friends, family, and acquaintances
- an inability to enjoy life

If you have these symptoms for months or years, you may need to ask your doctor about treatment for CG.

Symptoms of depression can be similar to CG. If you've been diagnosed with depression, CG can make your symptoms worse. In addition to CG symptoms listed above, depression can cause other unique symptoms, such as:

- constant sadness, anxiety, or feelings of emptiness
- feelings of guilt or helplessness
- loss of interest in hobbies
- insomnia or oversleeping
- suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts
- physical aches that don't go away with treatment

You can have symptoms of both CG and depression at the same time. However, CG and depression must be treated differently.

Risk factors

CG is most commonly caused by an unexpected or sudden death of a loved one (including suicide) and especially the death of a friend, child, or other family member. Violent deaths, such as from car accidents or natural disasters, can also cause CG.

A history of trauma or abuse can cause your normal grief to develop into CG as your mind and body struggle to accept your sudden loss. A previously dependent relationship to your lost loved one can also cause you distress that complicates your grief.

How complicated grief affects your brain

CG has been shown to activate parts of the brain associated with reward. One study found that CG stimulates the nucleus accumbens, which plays a part in your expectation of a reward. This part of the brain usually causes an extreme yearning for the lost loved one that's never satisfied. This could explain why CG can last for a long time, as it can be likened to an addiction.

POEM - Seasons of grief

Another study showed that CG can also stimulate your brain's amygdala, causing avoidance behaviors. This could further explain why CG can be prolonged, as it can cause you to avoid confronting or accepting the loss of a loved one. This avoidance is often coupled with the extreme yearning, worsening the addictive behaviors that can happen if you experience this condition.

Treatment options and coping

Your doctor may recommend therapy to treat your CG. Complicated grief therapy (CGT) involves techniques like repeatedly telling the story of your loved one's death. CGT may also help you focus on building your personal relationships and reaching your personal goals.

Research shows that antidepressants can help treat CG if you're also having therapy. Depression symptoms can result from CG and make your grief worse. CG can also worsen pre-existing depression. Antidepressants can help restore the brain imbalances that cause depression and help you through your grief. Talk to your doctor about antidepressants, and decide if antidepressants are the right choice for helping you confront and accept your loss.

Source: <http://www.healthline.com/health/depression/complicated-grief>

Seasons of Grief

by Belinda Stotler

Shall I wither and fall like an autumn leaf,
From this deep sorrow - from this painful grief?
How can I go on or find a way to be strong?
Will I ever again enjoy life's sweet song?

Sometimes a warm memory sheds light in the dark
And eases the pain like the song of a Meadow Lark.
Then it flits away on silent wings and I'm alone;
Hungering for more of the light it had shone.

Shall grief's bitter cold sadness consume me,
Like a winter storm on the vast angry sea?
How can I fill the void and deep desperate need
To replant my heart with hope's lovely seed?

Then I look at a photo of your playful smiling face
And for a moment I escape to a serene happy place;
Remembering the laughter and all you would do,
Cherishing the honest, caring, loving spirit of you.

Shall spring's cheerful flowers bring life anew
And allow me to forget the agony of missing you?
Will spring's burst of new life bring fresh hope
And teach my grieving soul how to cope?

Sometimes I'll read a treasured card you had given me
And each word's special meaning makes me see,
The precious gift of love I was fortunate to receive,
And I realise you'd never want to see me grieve.

Shall summer's warm brilliant sun bring new light,
And free my anguished mind of its terrible plight?
Will its gentle breezes chase grief's dark clouds away,
And show me a clear path towards a better day?

When I visit the grave where you lie in eternal peace,
I know that death and heaven brought you release;
I try to envision your joy on that shore across the sea,
And, until I join you, that'll have to be enough for me.

For all the remaining seasons of my life on earth,
There'll be days I'll miss your merriment and mirth,
And sometimes I'll sadly long for all the yesterdays;
Missing our chats and your gentle understanding ways.

Yet, the lessons of kindness and love you taught me,
And the good things in life you've helped me to see;
Linger as lasting gifts that comfort and will sustain,
Until I journey to that peaceful shore and see you again.

Source: <http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/seasons-of-grief>

PhotoArt Images 2017

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Forgive

I remember the day like yesterday, when I looked into your heart,
I thought I saw forever, but forever fell apart.
I never knew this day would come, not in a million years.
That I would be sitting here without you, to wipe away my tears.

I told myself it was meant to be, but I knew it was a lie.
The thought of living without you, still forever makes me cry.

So I'm sitting here without you, four years since that day.
The day the boy I was meant to love, went so very far away.

I seem to love another now, just like you said I would.
But life here without you, still isn't very good.
I know you'd be so proud of me, to see how much I've changed.

I'm learning to trust again, to break away the chains.
The ones that held my walls so tight, that no one could get in.
I'm learning to love myself again, I'm learning to Forgive...

by Amber D. Shipler



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.