

INSIDE

Welcome from the Chair
Notice of AGM 2

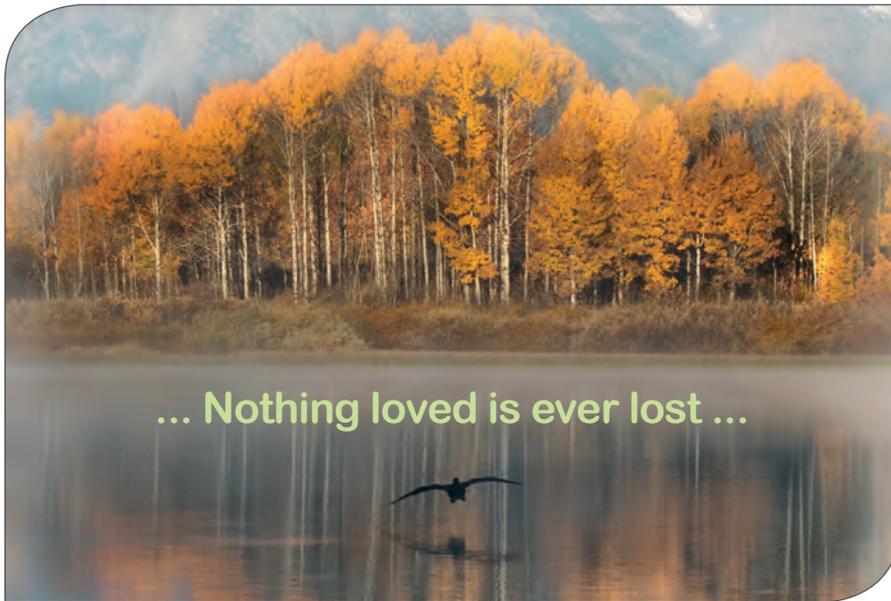
Upcoming National Events 3

Article - To the newly Bereaved 4

Article - Grieving on Father's Day 6

Article - Talking about Suicide 7

Poems
Additional support services 8



... Nothing loved is ever lost ...

Calendar of events

Sunday 6th August - BTS Coffee Morning

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

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 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 16th August – BTSSG Annual General Meeting

6pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3, 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Care Park, 15 Pitt St (directly opposite).

BTS invites all its members to attend the AGM which will be followed by light refreshments. The monthly support meeting will follow. We need your support. We are looking for a couple of new committee members as we have a couple of retirements and would welcome new faces to fill their roles.

Wednesday 16th August – BTS Support Meeting

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

Wednesday 20th September – BTS Monthly Support Meeting

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

Please call BTS support line on 0468 440 287 for time of meeting

Saturday 14th October - BTS Fundraising Sausage Sizzle

Bunnings Mile End 8.30am – 4.30pm. This is our major annual fundraiser and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible and sharing a chat whilst enjoying our sausage sizzle.

Wednesday 18th October - BTS Monthly Support Meeting

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

Please call BTS support line on 0468 440 287 for time of meeting

Sunday 5th November - BTS Coffee Morning

10am -12.30pm Botanic Gardens - Cafe Fibonacci on the Schomburg terrace.

A Welcome from the Chair

Dear All,

Welcome to the third edition of the 2017 Newsletter. It is difficult to believe that in a few weeks we will be having the BTS AGM on the 16th August as it seems that the last AGM was only a few months ago! We need to replace a couple of retiring committee members and I personally would ask that if you have a few hours once a month to attend a committee meeting and helping out that you consider nominating for the committee (see form below).

Being a committee member gives one a rewarding feeling knowing that you are providing the management of the support services to those experiencing the grief and loss of someone to suicide. Without new persons standing for the committee BTS will not be able to provide these services.

I would like to thank all those involved in the running of BTS. To the support workers and volunteers, the management committee and the members of our professional advisory council go my thanks to your continued involvement and providing your valuable contribution and time to BTS.

Looking back over the last 12 months I hope that the many of you who have used our services have found them to be of value and help. Through our monthly support meetings, coffee mornings, phone support, email and newsletters we are in touch regularly with over 500 people.

As committee members and support workers we have attended webinars and training courses and listened to advice from our members in an endeavour to continually improve the level of service we provide.

In this newsletter you will find information on national events taking place in September/October that focus on suicide prevention and mental health (on opposite page). We can all play a part in just asking our family, friends and work colleagues how they are feeling and listening to them, or even just putting an arm around their shoulder. Showing you care can make a huge difference to a person's mental health. Over the last 6 months at our support meetings we have had an increased attendance of people in the early days of bereavement so we have included an article on what may be some ways of coping with grief. September brings Fathers Day and difficulties on ways to handle this upcoming event and a personal story of the loss of a father. On pages 6-7 we have articles on coping with this day.

Finally, I can only reiterate that we need new committee members. I have now been on the committee for over 5 years and whilst there have been challenging moments overall I have met so many people who even in their time of grief and loss have been able to provide me with support when I have needed it.

With kindest of thoughts

Tim Porter
(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)

Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc. Notice of Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 16th August, 6pm at 3rd Floor, Uniting Communities, 10 Pitt St, Adelaide.

BTS invites all its members to attend the AGM which will be followed by light refreshments. The monthly support meeting will follow at 7pm. A good core group of members have made up our committee over the last few years. However we have committee members retiring this year and need new members. Please consider standing and contributing a few hours a month. Being a committee member is a most rewarding position as you realise that you are contributing to the framework that allows BTS to provide its important services to those bereaved by suicide.

Nominations are invited for the election of Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc. Committee and office bearers.

Please consider nominating yourself or if you know of someone who may be interested in standing for the committee, please give us a call on (08) 8332 8240 or 0468 440 287 or contact us at support@bts.org.au. If you wish, scan and email your completed form to support@bts.org.au by the 10th September. If you nominate, your nomination can be proposed and seconded by current committee members.

Nomination (Please Print Clearly)

I, (name of member proposing)

Phone Email

and I (name of member seconding)

Phone Email

Nominate (name of nominee)

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

Nomination Acceptance

I (nominee)accept the nomination as indicated above.

Nominee's signature Date.....

UPCOMING NATIONAL EVENTS

**WORLD
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
DAY**



World Suicide Prevention Day 10 September 2017

'Take a Minute, Change a Life' is the theme of the 2017 World Suicide Prevention Day (10 September). These three words are at the heart of suicide prevention and complement the efforts of our friends on R U OK? Day (14 September). Take time to notice what's going on with your family, friends and colleagues – and yourself. It is about taking time to have those conversation when you notice something has changed and equipping yourself to help yourself and others.

R U OK?TM

A conversation could change a life.

R U OK? Day 14th September 2017

R U OK? Day is a national day of action, dedicated to inspiring all people of all backgrounds to regularly ask each other 'Are you OK?'

It's a national day of action which aims to prevent suicide by encouraging Australians to connect with someone they care about and help stop little problems turning into big ones. On that day we want everyone across the country, from all backgrounds and walks of life, to ask family, friends and colleagues: "Are you OK?".

Staying connected with others is crucial to our general health and wellbeing. Feeling isolated or hopeless can contribute to depression and other mental illnesses, which can ultimately result in suicide. Regular, meaningful conversations can protect those we know and love.

It's so simple. In the time it takes to have a coffee, you can start a conversation that could change a life.

Mental health
BEGINS WITH *Me*

Mental Health Week 8th-14th October 2017

Help raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues. BTS will be holding a sausage sizzle and information day at Bunnings Mile End on Saturday 14th October. **Open your Mind. What you do can make the difference.**

Mental Health Week is an annual, national event that aims to improve community awareness and knowledge about mental health illness and reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health problems.

Events provide an opportunity to engage the wider community in learning more about mental health issues that impact South Australians.

World Mental Health Day is marked every year on 10th October.

TO THE NEWLY BEREAVED

Grieving is a unique, lonely extremely painful process with each individual working through their own space at their own pace, but it is comforting to know what helped others who have experienced the anguish in the aftermath of a loved one's suicide.

“GIVE SORROW WORDS. GRIEF HAS NEED TO SPEAK, LEST WHISPER THE O’ER FRAUGHT HEART AND BID IT BREAK”.

William Shakespeare/MacBeth

1. **Talk! Talk! Talk!** Speak of your pain, your loss and the cause of it as long and as often as you need to speak of it.
2. **Be with your grief.** Don't suppress, avoid or postpone grief's expression. Let yourself feel it! Cry! Tears are cathartic and cleansing. Friends/extended family feel helpless faced with the magnitude of the loss and grief. They try to soothe, may even plead with bereaved not to cry. Don't suppress your grief to spare others distress. If you are reluctant to express your pain in others' presence provide uninterrupted time each day to reflect upon the life shared, your loss and sorrow ... a time to mourn. Plan this private time during the day, allowing yourself some pleasant distraction during the pre-bedtime hours. In this manner you manage your grief and allow healing without the discomfort of thinking your grief expressions impose upon others.
3. **Let your friends give what they offer** ... to be with you, to share a meal, to run errands, to listen to your heartbreak. When you feel the times of being alone are unbearable, call upon them. Friends extend "Let me know how I can help?" Most are sincere. By calling on friends when we need support we allow them the gift of sharing our loss. On the other hand, if we continually refuse help, we may send the message that no help is needed and future offers would be an intrusion. Sensitive people will understand both your need for support and for time alone.
4. **We seldom feel like accepting invitations,** often for a long time, but consider being with close friends/family at small dinner parties, movies, concerts, sports events, etc. So what if you lose your composure! These social events provide the mind momentary respite from what has happened and are a useful focus when sleep is elusive or tormenting memories overwhelm us.
5. **There is nothing funny about suicide or the death of someone we love** but there is healing power in humour. It's ok to laugh. Laughter is healthy and healing. It releases chemicals that enhance ones sense of well-being. Laughter relaxes and rests us. Laughter reassures our wounded psychic. Provide an opportunity for laughter by being with fun-loving people, watch a good comedy show or rent a nonsensical movie. Don't expect films with a theme of violence, sex or societal issue to be relaxing.
6. **Re-establish routine in your life as soon as possible.** People thrive on orderliness in their lives and a loved one's death disturbs this orderliness in the most devastating manner possible. Re-establishing routine is a major, necessary step in reaffirming life's continuance and future well being. For those who are confronted constantly by the family member's absence re-establishing routine means redistribution of household chores and living arrangements. Adjusting to a loved one's death means many heartbreaking, but necessary changes from life as it once was.
7. **Acute grieving depletes energy,** leaving little concern for good grooming. For a time it may take great effort and determination to shower, shave, arrange one's hair, makeup and dress each morning but caring for ones physical appearance is a critical step toward restoring well-being, balance and orderliness to ones life.
8. **Provide the best opportunity for restful sleep** by avoiding stimulants throughout the evening. Exercise is nature's anti-depressant. Exercise enhances sleep opportunity but should be done in the late afternoon. Caffeinated food, including chocolate and most carbonated drinks are sleep robbers. Alcohol is a depressant that magnifies an already depressed state of mind and does not contribute to restful, uninterrupted sleep. Alcohol masks feelings, lowers inhibition and deprives one of control. Alcohol consumption should be avoided during acute grief.
9. **Take the best possible care of yourself** ... of your emotional being, your mental, spiritual and physical being. Eat properly! Don't allow yourself to get too hungry or to go without meals. Try not to overeat. Often we experience a gnawing, empty feeling that we mistake as hunger and seek to fill that void with food that may be hard to digest or upsetting. Become informed of both the dynamics of grief and of suicide in order that your grief is not unnecessarily complicated by myths, fears and biases. Pace yourself. This process is aptly called "grief work" and it is truly the most exhausting task your emotions, mind or your physical body will ever be called upon to do. You may experience some physical symptoms, for grief often manifests itself physically. Do not dismiss these symptoms ... see your physician as soon as possible.
10. **Grief and the workplace.** For many bereaved it is an economic necessity to return to work soon after the funeral. Others return to work soon as a means of keeping mentally occupied and find solace in their work. Some postpone returning to their job fearing the additional stress created by work. Work can be helpful in restoring routine in one's life. Most employers are compassionate and sympathetic. Some have first hand knowledge of loss and grief and extend encouragement and understanding. Others have a very unrealistic view of how long it takes to "get over" a family members death and may not be tolerant of mistakes, distraction or quick trips to the bathroom to dry tears.



It can be helpful to discuss your limits and concerns with your employer, perhaps arriving at a compromise whereby you work a few hours a day when you first return to the workplace. It is also helpful when an employer engages a counsellor to speak of suicide bereavement with fellow employees placing them at greater ease in offering you support.

11. Suicidal thoughts are scary. When someone we love dies we are overwhelmed by the pain of loss and fear of the future without them. We may believe we cannot endure the intensity of the pain. For a time, we may not wish to. When the cause of death is suicide the surviving family members have been shown the worst possible example of how one can end pain and problems and the survivor may view ending their life as a way to stop hurting. It is normal to want to escape the pain of loss and grief. It is not abnormal to think of ending one's own life to escape it. But there is considerable difference between having suicidal thoughts and acting upon them. If you are obsessed with thoughts of killing yourself, begin to seriously consider ways of ending your life or believe you don't deserve to live due to some circumstance surrounding the loved one's death, see a mental health professional without delay. It would be a grave injustice to compound the loss and magnify the grief of others by this manner of resolving your own.

12. **What's normal!** What's not! Grief as we are taught to understand it is intensely distorted when suicide is the cause of death. You may question whether your feelings are normal. Most likely they are and you are experiencing normal emotional reactions to an abnormal occurrence .. suicide. Grief after suicide is often very effectively addressed within the safe environment of a suicide survivor support group. Never hesitate to seek professional counselling.

By LaRita Archibald

For children

Whether your dad died recently or many years ago, Father's Day and the lead up to it may be challenging.

It helps to accept that when grieving there are some occasions which may be very difficult, and then work out how best to manage them. Here are some thoughts and ideas which may help you plan for Father's Day, but remember to be flexible and do what feels right for you.

Put yourself first

You may like a quiet day on your own or you may feel it's important to mark the day in a special way. Maybe you'd like to go on a walk you used to do with your dad, visit somewhere special for the two of you, go through photo albums or go out with friends.

Remember with a card or gifts

You can mark the day with a Father's Day card if that feels right for you. Write in it what you would like to say to your dad. You may want to put it up at home or take it to the cemetery. You may also like to mark the day with gifts in memory of your dad.

Have a simple act of memorial

This can be just lighting a candle, planting something in the garden, or having some form of memorial gathering. You might also visit your dad's final resting place.

Seek support

Sometimes it can help to talk to someone apart from family and friends who may also be grieving.

For parents of children

Father's Day and the lead up to it can be a difficult time if your children's dad or step-dad has died.

It helps to accept that when a family is grieving there are some occasions which may be very difficult, and then work out how best to manage them. Here are some ideas which may help you plan for Father's Day, but remember to be flexible and do what feels right for you and your family.

Remember with a card or gifts

Your children can mark the day with a Father's Day card if that feels right for them. They can write or draw what they would like to share with their dad. You may want to put it up at home or take it to the cemetery. You could talk to your child's teacher about this, so they know it's OK to include a bereaved child in class Father's Day activities.

Hold an event to remember

This can be just lighting a candle, planting something in the garden, or watching a favourite movie together. You might also visit your children's dad's final resting place.

Look after yourself too

It can be hard to find space to look after yourself when you are also caring for children. Try and make sure that you also take some time for yourself, and find someone to talk to about your own feelings.

Seek support

Sometimes it can help to talk to someone apart from family and friends. You may have access to professional counselling, a local GP or a support group.

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>



Talking about suicide isn't easy, but it's necessary

My father died from suicide when I was 16. And while the emotional scars left behind are far reaching, I've come to realise how important it is for people who have been touched by suicide to share their experience, writes Sam Ikin.

Every day, five Australian men die from suicide. When I was 16 my father was one of them.

My parents divorced when I was four. My father moved to rural Victoria to practice as a veterinarian while we stayed in Brisbane. We were still very close and while we were young my brother and I would visit all the time. But as I got older I visited less and less.

In 1993 he asked me to come down for Christmas. It had been a while in between visits and I missed him. He bought me a train ticket that I never used. As a young, selfish teenager I decided I would fly down after New Year's Eve, but of course I didn't communicate very well back then and I think he assumed I just didn't want to visit. He killed himself on December 27.

I should have been there. He reached out to me. He wanted me with him but I refused. In the years that have passed I have learned that my feelings of guilt are irrational but that doesn't stop it. I can tell myself that over and over again but some deep part of my brain will always say, "I should have saved my dad". And I didn't.

For years I never talked about it. I just lived with the shame and when I thought about it I would do whatever I could to distract myself. I still have a box of his stuff in a cupboard that I can't bring myself to sort through.

Now I have kids of my own. Two boys just like he had. Every day I see him in them and I wish they could meet their pa. Every time I think about it, I feel a wave of guilt. Tears are welling in my eyes as I write this.

I have told this story a couple of times before and assumed I was the only one getting any benefit out of the cathartic process, but I've learned that's not true. At this week's Suicide Prevention Conference in Hobart a major theme will be the importance of people who have been touched by suicide sharing their experience.

Mark Davis spoke at the event. His partner died from suicide 11 years ago.

"He had a chemical imbalance in his brain that would, at times, see his mood swing from one (extreme) to the other. He was a mental health professional, top in his field at one of the major hospitals in Sydney," Mark said.

But despite his own knowledge of mental health he was unable to help himself.

"Discussions were being had about the longevity of the relationship. We had a short break where I went away to consider and he took that to be the end for him and he made the call and died of suicide sometime over that weekend."

Even after telling the story countless times, Mark still struggles through tears to get the words out.

"I came home on the Sunday night and discovered him. I've had professional experience in doing this in my past roles in hotels and as an air force police officer where I had uncovered people who had died from suicide ... but this was different because this was me. I had to deal with the emotional as well as the practicality side."

He said he also blames himself for not being able to stop his partner's death.

"I still do today. I blame myself that I didn't do enough. Whilst the logic and the counselling and the dollars that I've invested in it can tell me otherwise, deep down there's always that bit that says, 'if I had have done something different ... would it have been a different outcome?'"

Mark's situation was complicated even further by the fact that he was in a same-sex relationship.

"Being in a gay relationship 10 years ago wasn't as popular as it is today and I found that people's reaction to my loss was being diminished because I was in a gay relationship. I very quickly built up a resilience to all that and shut it down. I didn't talk about it for some time."

Sam Ikin is an online producer for ABC News Digital based in Hobart.

By ABC's Sam Ikin (excerpt)

POEM AND CONTACTS

Grief

Grief can make us seem very selfish,
focussed only on the people we lost,
ignoring our loved ones around us
not aware of the hurt and loss.

We miss events, parties and get togethers,
we stare blank at people when they speak,
life totally feels dark and bleak.

It isn't that we don't care,
It isn't that we don't want to take part.

We just need time to adjust and learn
how to live with a broken heart.

-Anon

I had my own notion of grief.

I thought it was a sad time that followed the
death of someone you love... and you have
to push through it to get to the other side.

But I'm learning there is no other side.
There is no pushing through.

But rather, there is absorption,
adjustment, acceptance.

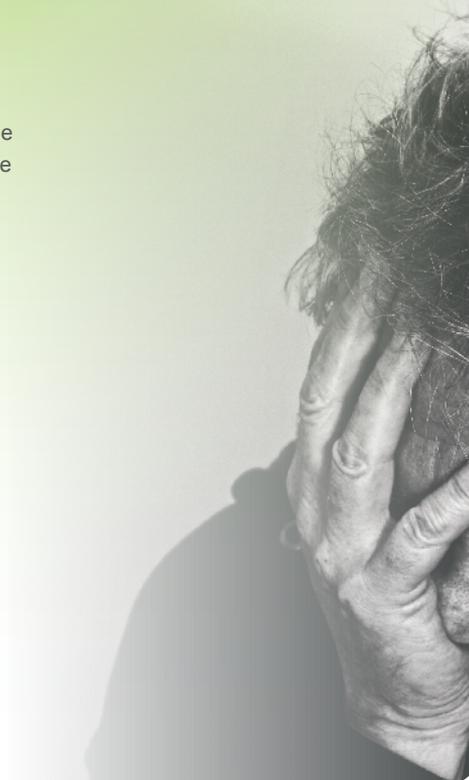
And grief is not something that you
complete, but rather you endure.

Grief is not a task to finish and move on,
but an alteration of your being.

A new way of seeing.

A new definition of self.

-Anon



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, Mandy Porter Photography and Monsigneur Creative for their ongoing 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.