

For the one who has lost a Mum,
For the Mum that has lost her child...
You are not forgotten this Mother's Day
and are in our thoughts and prayers.

INSIDE

Welcome from the Chair
Volunteering 2

BTS Film Fundraiser 3

Article - Anticipating
Mother's Day 4

Article - When a parent takes
their own life 6

Remembrance 7

Additional support services 8

Calendar of events

Sunday 7th May - 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 17th May - BTS Monthly Support Meeting.

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

Sunday 21st May - BTS Fund-raising Film Afternoon.

5.15pm Capri Theatre, Goodwood Rd, Goodwood.

Join us for nibbles and a drink followed by the movie 'The Zookeepers Wife'. BTS looks forward to you joining us and supporting the suicide bereaved community. Tickets \$25. More details on page 3.

Wednesday 21st June - BTS Monthly Support Meeting.

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

Wednesday 19th July - BTS Monthly Support Meeting.

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

Sunday 6th August - BTS Coffee Morning

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

A Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our newsletter. As I sit writing this letter on a beautiful sunlit day and think of what to write my mind reflects on recent events and how they have influenced my life, how much life changes. And then my mind drifts back to the events of seven years ago and the momentous changes that ensued. It seems my journey is now going through a stage of wanting to gain more information, more advice and provide more help to those bereaved by suicide.

To this end a small group of BTS members attended the Postvention Australia conference for the first time at the end of March. The conference ran for 3 days. Those attending were a mixture of bereaved and clinicians/academics. Presenters offered a diverse range of topics for both streams. Speakers from overseas were especially worthwhile and gave some valuable information to improve the services of BTS. Of most value were the techniques offered to get through the difficult times, to find ways to help handle those moments when we feel our thoughts enclosed by grief. Many of these techniques were simple in design but effective in the result delivered. Another area of interest is recent research in neuro-science and the way the brain is altered by traumatic events and what can be done to help alleviate these changes. This is very much in its infancy but can help to explain the emotional and physical toll that trauma has on one's life.

On Sunday 21st May BTS is holding its annual Fundraising Film night. Not only does this raise necessary funds to keep the group financial it also raises awareness in the community at large. We endeavour to find a movie that has wide appeal and have done so again this year with the screening of 'The Zookeeper's Wife'. Please come along, invite as many friends as possible and have a wonderful evening supporting a very worthwhile organisation.

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)

Who is the Bereaved through Suicide Support Group?

Run by people who themselves have been bereaved through suicide, BTS supports those in the community who have been close to someone who has taken their own life – partner, child, relative, friend or close acquaintance.

Telephone support service: **(08) 8332 8240** or **0468 440 287** from 8am - 8pm

Email support service: support@bts.org.au

Suicide bereavement resources: www.bts.org.au

Each month BTS holds a support meeting. Facilitated by trained Support Workers, themselves having lost someone to suicide, it is a place for people to find compassion, support and understanding. Thoughts of attending a meeting can be incredibly daunting. Many of us want to be alone. But knowing and talking to others that know, and have an understanding of, how you feel can provide some help and solace in this incredibly difficult journey.

BTS receives no government funding and all work is undertaken by volunteers, however we incur costs by providing the support services above. 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**



BTS needs volunteers to continue undertaking its support of the suicide bereaved community. Volunteering for BTS can take many forms; lending a hand at our monthly meetings, being a support worker or standing on the committee. A support worker helps facilitate our monthly meetings and provide support to those who attend. Our volunteers may man the door and tea-coffee making at our support meetings and help out at our fund-raising events. Finally being a committee member gives you great satisfaction in knowing that you are supporting a group of people who are learning to live with the loss of someone to suicide. We have a couple of casual vacancies available on our current committee. It only involves giving up a couple of hours one night a month and a little bit of your spare time. Without volunteers BTS ceases to exist. The 8-14th May is National Volunteer Week. Please consider giving a few hours a month to supporting BTS.

BTS - Film Fundraiser

BTS warmly invites you to attend its upcoming film fundraiser.



BTS Support Group Proudly presents...

THE ZOOKEEPER'S WIFE
Starring Jessica Chastain

THE CAPRI CINEMA
141 Goodwood Road, Goodwood

SUNDAY 21st May, 2017
from 5.15pm

Organ recital 6.15pm - Movie commences 6.30pm

Enjoy nibbles, a complimentary glass of Champagne/Beer/Wine and participate in an exciting Raffle.

TICKETS Only \$25.00

Tickets available through :

1. Eventbrite at www.eventbrite.com.au/e/bereaved-through-suicide-bts-support-group-fundraiser-tickets-33762814487?aff=es2
2. BTS phone: 0468440287 Can be paid by Visa/Mastercard. Tickets will be posted out or be available at the door.
3. Bank deposit: Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 A/C 148312366. Quote Surname and number of tickets.
4. Direct from BTS ticket sellers.

Anticipating Mother's Day

As Mother's Day approaches, I think of our newly bereaved parents who will be facing their first or possibly second Mother's Day without their child.

I remember my first Mother's Day without my son. It was, quite frankly, a sad day for me. But I got through it and a few days later, I got through his birthday as well. In our first year of grief each milestone seems to mark distance from our children.....we count that distance in minutes, hours, days, weeks and months.

How we spend Mother's Day is strictly a unique decision made by each parent, each Mother.

There are no rules. While we all walk this grief road together, we each walk it in our unique way.

No two people grieve in the same way, because no two people are alike.

Before we lost our children to death, Mother's Day was a happy time. We each reflect back on Mother's Day past.....gifts, cards, special memories and one day set aside to acknowledge the best in our relationship with our treasured children.

With the death of our child, this dynamic was forever transfigured. Now, instead of looking forward to this day, we grasp at anything that will keep our minds away from it. Yet the anxiety still creeps into our minds and hearts; our stomachs churn and tears fill our eyes at the most in-opportune moments. The dreadful countdown begins in late April and lasts for nearly three weeks.

This is the eighth Mother's Day I have endured since the death of my son. Each year I have the same, desperate anxiety, yet each year the day is a bit easier to handle. Each year the anticipation is far worse than the day itself.... "borrowing trouble" as my dad would say. Since my son is my only child, I do not have the comfort of other children nor do I have the need to put on a happy face. Instead, I am able to choose what I will do without feeling the burden of guilt.

While my first Mother's Day was filled with tears, subsequent Mother's Days have been more subdued.

The choice to embrace or ignore Mother's Day is yours alone. Many bereaved mothers adopt a new perspective which honours their child and still gives normalcy to their family.

Mother's Day is bittersweet for us. The pain is part of the love that we will feel for our children for eternity. We wouldn't trade one treasured moment for a cosmic reduction of our pain.

Some of us plan the day carefully. Some of us just "go with the flow." Some of us weep; some of us work. Some of us read, some of us revel in this special moment set aside just for mothers.

Each of us makes a choice that is based on our own truth.

The day itself is not nearly as overwhelming as the buildup of anxiety and sadness which precedes it. I have found this to be true of all holidays, birthdays, death anniversaries and special occasions. I am trying to live in the moment. When the moment of Mother's Day happens, I will decide what I should do.

I refuse to let others pressure me. I refuse to become maudlin over greeting card commercials and heart-grabbing point-of-purchase marketing efforts. I will not be manipulated by the agenda of others.

But on Mother's Day, as on each day of the year, I will think of my son, remembering the child he was and the man he became. I will honour his life by doing the best I can with what is left of my life. I will remain in the moment and treasure my memories. And for this mother, that is enough.

SOURCE: http://www.compassionatefriends.org/WNNWA_stories/Anticipating_Mothers_Day.aspx

Grief, Anniversaries and significant events

Birthdays, holidays, Christmas, Valentine's Day, anniversaries, the day they died, the day we met.

For the bereaved, the list of significant events that can trigger grief responses can be endless. Other losses experienced after the death of a loved one, whether they be additional bereavements, loss of possessions, relationships, employment, etc., can also be particularly strong grief triggers.

While our responses will change over time, the sorrow and pain as these anniversaries and events come and go can be draining and emotionally exhausting. The lead up to such events can often feel worse than the day itself. In the lead up to anniversaries and other significant events, the first question you need to ask yourself is: What do I need at this time? This is not a selfish question. Significant occasions can be really hard, so make sure that you tune into your own needs, as well as those around you.

This information is designed to provide ideas and strategies to assist you to support yourself, or someone who is grieving, during these times.

Planning

It is important to do some planning in the lead up to significant occasions. Planning can give you a greater sense of control, which can help to ease some of the anxiety and concern you may be feeling.

Occasions such as birthdays and Christmas often come with established traditions and rituals. Some people prefer to stick with traditions they have always had, but don't be afraid to alter your traditions if you need to. Your 'normal' has inevitably changed, and you may prefer to create new traditions accordingly. If you decide to cancel your usual activities altogether, that's okay too, but make sure you plan something else to do, as too much free time may leave you feeling isolated and lonely.

Share your plan with family and friends

Once you have planned how you would like the day/occasion to go, make sure you let your friends and family know that this is what you intend to do. Be honest with them and let them know that it is a difficult time for you. Often they feel unsure how to act around you, so let them know that it's okay for them to talk to you about your loved one, and that if you get upset, then that's okay too. If you are



planning to attend an event or gathering, it might be useful to let the organiser know that whilst you intend to go, this may change on the day, or you may need to leave early depending on how you are feeling. This will 'let you off the hook', in that you can feel comfortable leaving if it all gets too much.

Take good care of yourself

It is important to take good care of yourself physically and emotionally in the lead up to, and during, significant occasions. Eat well and listen to your body, e.g. if you are tired, make sure you get some rest. Likewise, make sure you take care of yourself emotionally. Try not to suppress your emotions, e.g. if you need to have a good cry, then do so, as you will likely feel better afterwards. On the other hand, don't be afraid to enjoy yourself if this occurs. Happiness and sadness can co-exist, and being happy is not disrespectful to the memory of your loved one. You may also choose to avoid people at this time, particularly those who are unable to understand your experience of loss.

Self-care tips and strategies

Below are a variety of ideas that may help you to better navigate significant events.

Beforehand

- Look at your diary and make a note of events and milestones that may be difficult for you. Start to think about what you can do during these times to look after yourself.
- Consider arranging to be with someone who understands during these times.
- Decide how you want to spend the day, and let friends and family know so they can better support you.
- Think about how to answer certain greetings in advance. For example, when someone wishes you a 'happy holidays', you may respond with 'thank you', 'I'll do my best', or 'best wishes to you too'.
- Keep a journal in the lead up to, and after, the significant occasion. Make note of things that were particularly difficult so that you can better navigate them next time.

On the day

- Free yourself from the expectations of yourself and others, and give yourself permission to not be okay.
- You might like to come up with some small rituals to honour and acknowledge your loss, e.g. writing a letter to your loved one, visiting a landmark, or arranging to meet up with friends and family.
- Express your feelings through a creative outlet, e.g. painting, art and craft, writing, dancing.
- Talk to other people about your memories of your loved one and ask them about theirs.
- Do something you wouldn't normally do in memory of them, e.g. make a donation in their name, plant a memorial tree, sign up for

a class in something you've always wanted to do, or volunteer to help a charity.

- Do something that makes you feel good. It may be as simple as reading your favourite magazine, going for a walk, listening to music, getting a massage or enjoying a good cup of coffee.

Seeking further help

Although grief can be very painful, most people (85–90%) find that with the support of their family and friends and their own resources, they gradually find ways to learn to live with their loss and do not need to seek professional help. Sometimes however, the circumstances of the death may have been particularly distressing, such as a traumatic or sudden death, or there may be circumstances in your life which make your grief particularly acute or complicated. If you are finding it difficult to manage on a day-to-day basis, it may be helpful to see a counsellor or other health professional. It's okay to admit you are struggling with your grief. No-one will think any less of you if you ask for help along the way.



WHEN A PARENT TAKES THEIR OWN LIFE:

A PSYCHIATRIST'S ADVICE

When a parent dies, it's always painful for a child. And a parent's death by suicide—especially, research shows, a mother's suicide—has an even more painful and potentially disturbing effect.

As with all traumatic events, the way in which kids are supported in processing their feelings about the loss affects how successfully they will recover. Children are very resilient, and while a parent's suicide will never stop being an important event in their lives, with help they can recover their emotional health and vitality.

When children experience the sudden death of a parent, they go through what we call traumatic grieving. This kind of death is not just a painful thing to assimilate; it triggers an emotionally complicated or conflicted process.

On the one hand, when a death is shocking and disturbing it generates frightening thoughts, images, and feelings a child may want desperately to avoid. In the case of a suicide, children may have feelings toward or about their parent that they feel are unacceptable, that they want to deny. So they try to block them out, by not talking or thinking about the person they've lost, who they may feel has betrayed them, or rejected them. But to grieve in a healthy way, it's necessary to think about the person you've lost, and allow yourself to feel sadness and pain. They need to be able to remember her as a loving mom, before she succumbed to the disease, depression, that caused her death.

Even more than an accidental death, a suicide generates horror, anger, shame, confusion, and guilt—all feelings that a child can experience as overwhelming. The biggest risk to a child's emotional health is not being able, or encouraged, to express these feelings, and get an understanding of what happened that he or she can live with. When a mother who has been depressed and takes her own life, we want that understanding to be that she suffered from a mental illness, a disorder in her brain that caused her death, despite the efforts of those who loved her to save her.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins Children's Center found that children who are under 18 when their parents suicide are three times as likely as children with living parents to later suicide themselves. The likelihood increases when the parent who suicides is the mother. This highlights the vital importance of providing support to children who are grieving. Not only are we treating the trauma of sudden parental loss, we are also trying to break the suicide cycle in families.

What do children need most in the aftermath of a suicide? First, they require simple and honest answers to their questions. They need to know that their feelings are acceptable: anger at a mother who killed herself is normal, and it doesn't mean a betrayal of the love you feel for her, or the terrible loss you may be feeling. If the person who died has been mentally ill for a long time, a child might actually feel relieved at the death, and that, too, he or she needs to be allowed to feel.

After a suicide, children need to know that they're not to blame. Being natural narcissists, kids tend to put themselves at the center of the narrative: If I had behaved better, if I had come home right after school, if I had tried harder to cheer Mom up, etc., she wouldn't have done this. What we want them to understand is that mom was ill. We did our best to help her, but it didn't succeed. This isn't an understanding that's achieved in one conversation; it's something that has to be worked on over time.

If there is media coverage of the death, it helps children to turn off the TV and stay away from the tabloids. It helps children recover to keep their lives as normal as possible—to return to routines as soon as possible, to return to school and regular activities.

When should you worry about a child failing to recover in a healthy way? Though it's difficult to distinguish problem behaviour from the expected process of grieving, there are some key things to look for.

With a "regular" traumatic experience, like being close to an accident, an attack, a disaster, we expect signs of recovery in about a month. But the timetable for grieving is less clear, so the recovery process can take longer. If a child's sadness and withdrawal from normal activities don't dissipate over time, and they begin to cause impairment—refusal to go to school, changes in sleep habits, a decrease in appetite, irritability—they can be cause for concern.

The biggest sign that someone is not grieving in a natural way is a confused relation to the memory of the loved one. This can include avoiding places or situations that might remind a child of the parent who died, emotional numbing, or selective amnesia about the traumatic loss. On the other hand, it can manifest as intrusive thoughts about the event. These all get in the way of the process of forming memories of a parent that's part of the healthy grieving process.

Who is at most risk for suffering long-lasting trauma? Children with avoidant personalities or extreme anxiety will more easily fall into an unhealthy coping style. Children who have experienced other traumas are also more likely to respond poorly, given the "practice" they have had. Kids who lack strong support networks—both within the family and within the community at large—suffer more. And girls, for reasons we don't fully understand, appear three times more likely to have traumatic reactions to disturbing events.

Finally, when we imagine a child's experience of the loss of a parent to suicide, we need to recognize that the family may have been struggling with mental illness and addiction for years, which must surely have taken a toll. The most important thing to keep in mind is that the antidote to traumatic grief is honesty, loving support, and the continuation of the family in its strongest possible form.

Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/05/18/when-a-parent-commits-suicide-a-psychiatrist-s-advice.html>

REMEMBRANCE

Happy 40th Birthday Nadia.

To a precious daughter, partner, niece and granddaughter, a cherished cousin and friend; you brought such joy, laughter and love to all our lives.

I remember your radiant smile,
infectious laughter, exotic beauty,
unconditional love, and fierce loyalty.

I can still feel the warmth of your hugs
and that special way you held my
hand, just because you could.

I remember how my heart hurt when I
watched you struggle to conquer the
demons that haunted you.

I remember how I admired your
strength and courage and how proud I
have always been of you.

I remember your love of animals and
the pure pleasure you derived from
being with all furred, feathered or
scaled critters.

I remember your intelligence, quick wit
and sense of humour. You were a gift,
a blessing; life was more perfect with
you in it.

Nadia you made our lives complete.



The grief of a Grieving Mother is the most intense grief known. When a child dies, parents feel that a part of them has died, that a vital and core part of them has been ripped away. The grief caused by their child's death is not only painful but profoundly disorienting.

Children are not supposed to die. These parents are forced to confront an extremely painful and stressful paradox; they are faced with a situation in which they must deal both with the grief caused by their child's death and with their inherent need to continue to live their own lives as fully as possible.

fb/grievingmothers

**My child died.
I don't need advice.
All I need is for you
to gently close your mouth,
open wide your heart and
walk with me until
I can see in color again.**

A Bed For My Heart

Poem and Contacts

A Pair of shoes

I am wearing a pair of shoes. They are ugly shoes.
Uncomfortable shoes. I hate my shoes.
Each day I wear them, and each day I wish I had another pair.
Some days my shoes hurt so bad that I do not think
I can take another step. Yet, I continue to wear them.
I get funny looks wearing these shoes. They are looks of sympathy.
I can tell in others eyes that they are glad they are my shoes and not theirs.
They never talk about my shoes. To learn how awful my shoes are.
Might make them uncomfortable.
To truly understand these shoes, you must walk in them.
But, once you put them on, you can never take them off.
I now realise that I am not the only one who wears these shoes.
There are many pairs in this world.
Some women are like me and ache daily as they try and walk in them.
Some have learned how to walk in them so they don't hurt quite as much.
Some have worn the shoes so long that says will go by before they think
about how much they hurt.
No woman deserves to wear those shoes. Yet, because of those shoes
I am a stronger woman.
These shoes have given me the strength to face anything.
They have made me who I am.
I will forever walk in the shoes of a woman who has lost a child.



all-greatquotes.com

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.