

INSIDE



Kindness is like snow, it beautifies everything it touches

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Calendar of events

Wednesday 15th November - BTS 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. Facilitated by trained Support Workers, themselves having lost someone to suicide, it is a place for people to find compassion, support and understanding. Talking to others that know and have an understanding of how you feel can provide some help and solace in this incredibly difficult journey.

Sunday 19th November – LBS Annual Walk Through Darkness

The Walk begins at 5am with the Remembrance Service beginning at 6.30am. For more information see page 3.

Sunday 3rd December - BTS Xmas Morning Tea

10am -12.30pm Botanic Gardens – Barber Shop Rotunda. This is an opportunity to catch up with others who have lost someone to suicide in the beautiful surroundings of the Botanic Gardens. BTS will provide coffee and cake. For more information see page 3.

Sunday 4th February - BTS Coffee Morning

10am -12.30pm Botanic Gardens - Cafe Fibonacci on the Schomburg terrace. 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 21st February - 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.

A Welcome from the Chair

Each time I sit to write for the newsletter I think back over the last 3 months and the people I have met and how BTS is providing support. I reflect on this newsletter and the organisation and realise that the loss of someone to suicide is so difficult to discuss, think about, put into words. It changes us, alters our lives. For many it is even difficult to discuss amongst their own family and friends let alone the community.

Suicide creates loneliness as who can understand the depth of pain, hurt and despair we feel. We may close our doors, shut ourselves away in an attempt to deal with our loss. Somehow we learn to cope, maybe with the help of others, and find a way to go on.

When BTS was formed back in the mid 1980's there was no such thing as information technology. The mobile phone and internet have hugely changed the way we communicate. Information is now available at the touch of a button from anywhere in the world. People can converse with anyone in the world through the many social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. An individual can even create their own web page and blog.

These technological changes are also changing the nature of BTS. We have seen a rise in the number of people visiting our website, ringing our phone line and receiving the newsletter, especially via email. In the reverse we are seeing less people attend our monthly meetings. In response we are creating a new website to be more informative and carry more content.

The changes in how society looks for, and receives information is a major issue for BTS. How do we provide instant information to persons when we are a volunteer organisation and all our volunteers have other jobs/roles in life. We also need to acknowledge that there are now many other organisations that mirror some of the roles that BTS undertakes. This is the major challenge for BTS into the future.

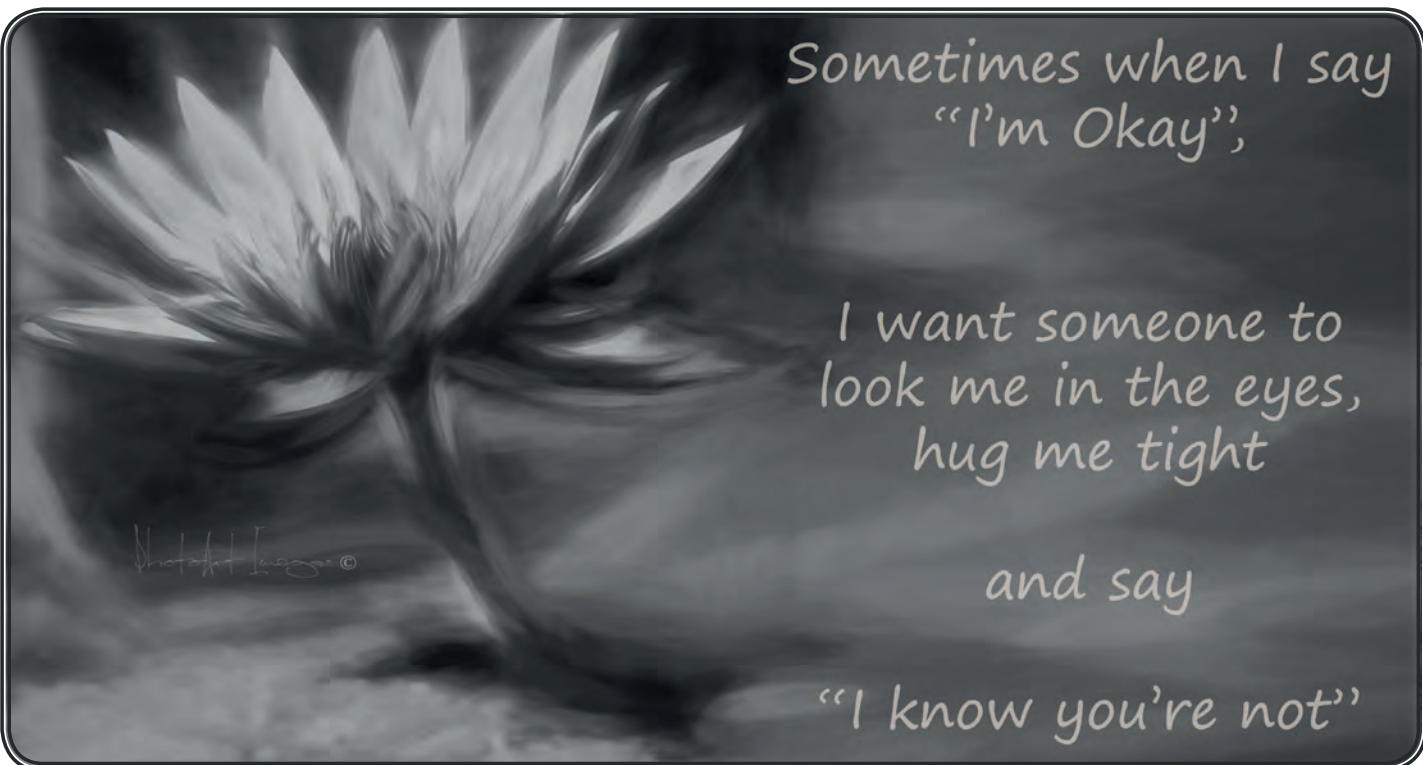
With the Anglicare LBS/Wesley LifeForce Walk Through Darkness/Remembrance Service being held on the 19th November, a few weeks before the traditional BTS remembrance service we have decided that this year that we should have a more socially orientated family event. This year we have decided to have a morning tea picnic in the Botanic Gardens at the Barbershop Rotunda on Sunday morning 3rd December. We look forward to seeing you there and enjoying your company in a relaxed, caring environment.

Finally thank you to all those who have provided encouragement, support and a kind word through 2017 and thank you to the support workers, committee and volunteers for their commitment and work through-out the year.

May you all travel safely through the next few months and know that you are in our thoughts.

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)



*Sometimes when I say
"I'm Okay",*

*I want someone to
look me in the eyes,
hug me tight*

and say

"I know you're not"

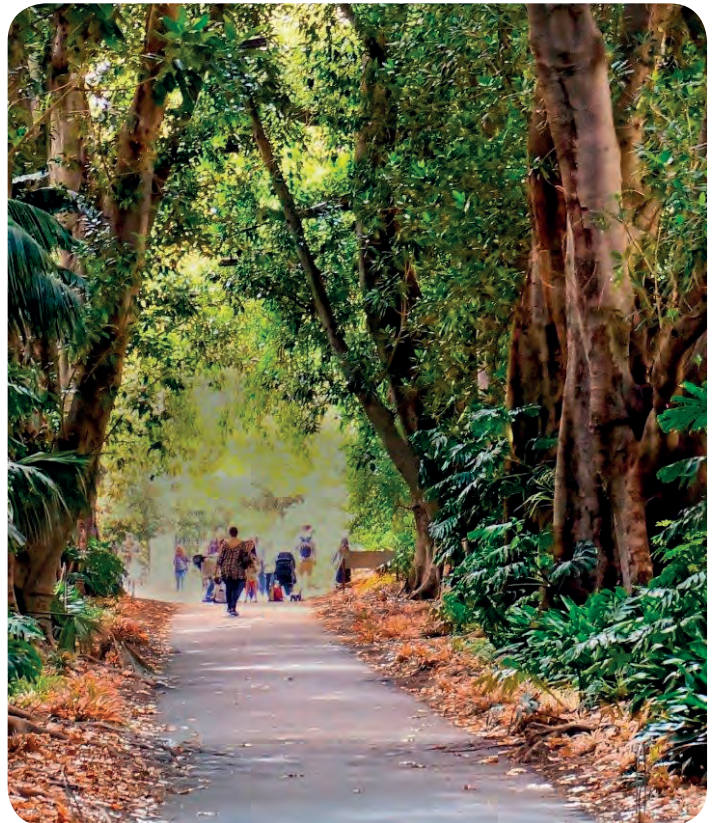
UPCOMING EVENTS

BTS Xmas Morning Tea, Sunday 3 December 2017

BTS invites you to its Xmas Picnic to be held at the Barbershop Rotunda, Botanic Gardens on Sunday 3rd December, 10am-midday. (The Barbershop Rotunda is located at the northern end of the Mediterranean Garden). BTS has decided that this year rather than hold a formal event similar to that held by Living beyond Suicide and the Walk Through Darkness that we would have a less formal event where people could catch up, mingle and listen to others in the lovely surroundings of the Botanic Gardens.

Coffee and cake will be provided by BTS from Café Fibonacci.

Can you please call BTS on the support line **0468 440 287** or email at support@bts.org.au to advise if you will be joining us so we can arrange numbers with the Café.



Walk Through Darkness Saturday 18 November 2017

Hosted by Living Beyond Suicide the walk begins from 2 locations:

- West Beach 5am,
Adelaide Shores Sailing Club,
Barcoo Road
- Tennyson 5am,
Oarsman Reserve,
opposite 183 Military Road

Walk the entire way or join us from 6:30am at Henley Square for a Memorial Service, hosted by Wesley Lifeforce.

wesleymission.org.au/memorialdays

Complimentary breakfast, tea and coffee are provided.



SUPPORTING CHILDREN BEREAVED BY SUICIDE

The idea of talking to children about suicide is daunting for parents or carers. This information is designed to provide advice and insight into how best to talk to, and support, a child bereaved by suicide.

Common grief reactions in children after a suicide

Children react to and express their grief differently from adults. They often express their feelings through their behaviour and play. As a carer you may notice the child regressing (returning) to younger behaviours such as wetting the bed, or becoming clingy, anxious, and demanding of your attention. The child may also express their grief through play, repeating the same game or story over and over again or perhaps including re-enactments of death and violence in their play. These types of behaviour and play are normal for any grieving child.

Talking about a suicide death with children

It will usually be up to you to choose the time to talk about the death. You can sometimes find cues in their play and other behaviour indicating that the child is ready to have some conversation about the death. However you start the conversation, here are some important things to remember:

- Ensure that you talk to the child in a safe space where there are no distractions.
- In most cases talk to the child as soon as possible. However, keep in mind that if the child doesn't want to talk, you cannot force a conversation. Let them know that you are available to talk about the death when they feel more ready.
- You can have a limited one-sided conversation if you feel this appropriate. Outline the things you would like them to know, these may be facts about the death, how you and others are feeling, inviting but not requiring the child to engage in the conversation with you. These one-sided conversations act as stepping stones for the child in their understanding of the death, and over time they can move from being a passive to an active participant in subsequent conversations.
- Be honest (in an age-appropriate way) about the circumstances of the death: at some point the truth will come out, and it is better for the child to be told in a safe and space by a main caregiver than for the child to receive only half the truth from someone else. Reassure the child that they did not cause the death. Children may be asking themselves, "Did I cause this to happen?" and often feel guilty or responsible for the death.





Age-appropriate language

- Explain truthfully on a level that the child can understand what caused the death. There is no need to go into upsetting or unnecessary details.
- With young children it may be helpful to ask what they think “suicide” and “being dead” means. This provides an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings they have about death or suicide.
- The word suicide can present some confusion for young children. It is here that you could say that the person “killed themselves” or “made their body stop working.” Avoid telling the child that the person has “gone to sleep” or “left us”, as these statements can easily be misunderstood. Such statements can cause anxiety about sleeping or feelings of being abandoned.
- If unsure how to answer questions that a child may ask, or how to talk to the child, seek advice. You may wish to seek some counselling face to face, or contact the Suicide Call Back Service for telephone counselling.

If you have told a different story or lied about the suicide

It's not too late to tell your child if you have already told them a different story about the circumstances of the death. You may want to explain that sometimes adults can have difficulties talking to children about these things and you didn't know how to best explain the death at the time. Apologising and correcting truths about the death allows you to be a positive role model by teaching children a valuable lesson about how lies can be corrected.

Concerns about copycat behaviour in children

A common concern for parents or main carers is about their children copying suicidal behaviour. Through explaining that sometimes people find it hard to talk about their problems or worries, you can emphasise the importance of talking about feelings whenever they may be down or sad. Explore possible key persons that the child can talk to if you or their main carer is not available, such as a relative, school teacher, or counsellor. It is important to reassure the child that suicide is not common and that many things in the dead person's life led to them feeling so deeply unhappy, troubled and confused. Reassure the child that we all experience positive and negative feelings as part of life.

Participating in family rituals and the funeral

The viewing and funeral service provides an opportunity for children to say goodbye and express some grief. It is important for the child to feel important and involved. One way to involve the child is to invite them to contribute to the funeral service by choosing a favourite song, writing a letter or drawing a card. Prior to attending the funeral service it would be helpful to discuss with the child what will happen at the funeral, where it will be held and what it will look like.

You could also mention that people will be sad and quiet so they are prepared for what the service will be like.

Importance of memories

Memories not only remind the child of the relationship that they have with the deceased but also play a critical role in the child's grieving process. There are a number of activities children can do to evoke or symbolize their relationship with the deceased. Create a memory box or memory book which may contain photos, poems, artworks, pressed flowers or other mementos. You could also look at photos, create a painting or drawing, or plant a tree.

Dealing with the child's school after a suicide

- It is important that you don't assume that the school teachers or counsellors know what has happened. Contact the school and advise them of the death and circumstances before your child goes back to school.
- You may also want to rehearse with the child what they will say to their friends or teachers so that they are well prepared.
- Maintain contact with the teachers and inform them of any anniversary dates and extra stressful times.

Things you can do at home

While adults may be grieving and their jobs or day-to-day duties are put on hold, children still need to adhere to their daily routine for a sense of security. Children need to know who will be there to care for them. In circumstances where it is the parent who has died by suicide, the child needs to be reassured that they will be safe and cared for. Let them know that it is okay to feel happy, laugh and play. They don't have to feel sad all the time.

Self-care and support

It can be difficult as a parent or main carer to tend to your child's needs when you may be struggling with your own grief. It is vital that you look after yourself and surround yourself with some extra support so that you do not have to go through this alone.

SUICIDE CALL BACK SERVICE - 1300 659 467

The Suicide Call Back Service is a free nationwide telephone support service, staffed by real people with professional qualifications. Operating 24/7, our expert counsellors call you, at a time that suits you, and provide support through up to six 50 minute counselling sessions.

<https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/about>



GETTING THROUGH THE XMAS HOLIDAY SEASON

***Remember these are only suggestions and not all of them will be right for you*.**

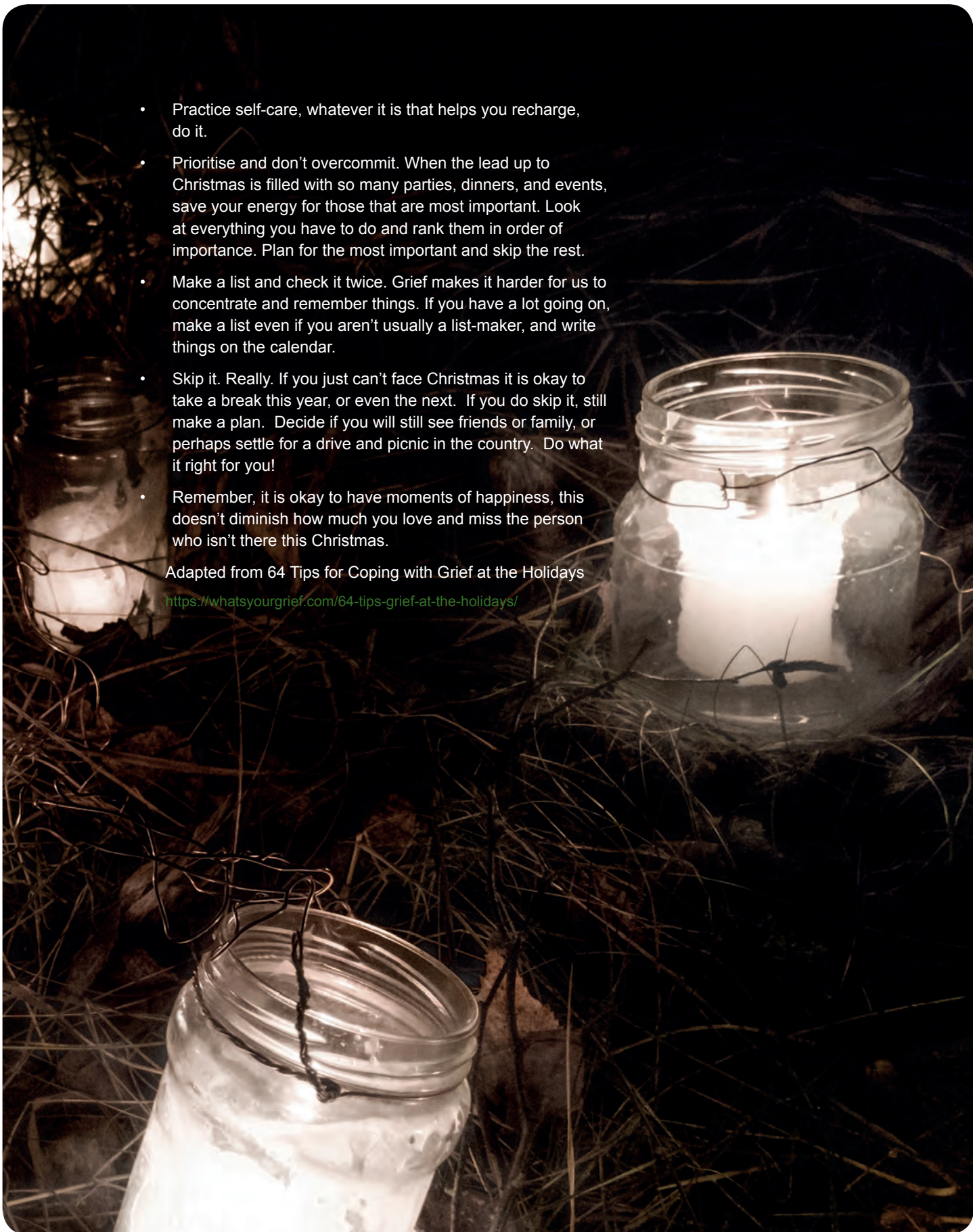
- Decide which traditions you want to keep.
- Decide which traditions you want to change.
- Acknowledge that Christmas will be different and could be tough.
- Create a new tradition in memory of your loved one.
- Decide where you want to spend the Christmas – you may want to change the location, or it may be of comfort to keep it the same. Either way, make a conscious decision about location.
- Plan ahead and communicate with the people you will spend the day with in advance, to make sure everyone is in agreement about traditions and plans.
- Remember that not everyone will be grieving the same way you are grieving.
- Put out a 'memory stocking', 'memory box', or other special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure. Pick a time to read them together.
- Light a candle in your home in memory of the person you've lost.
- Include one of your loved one's favourite dishes at your Christmas table.
- Be honest. Tell people what you DO want to do for the holidays and what you DON'T want to do.
- Make a donation to a charity that was important to your loved one in their name.
- Buy a gift you would have given to your loved one and donate it to a local charity.
- Make a memorial ornament, wreath, or other decoration in honour of your loved one.
- Journal when you are having an especially bad day.
- Skip events if you are not up to them and don't give it a second thought.
- If you do go to events, drive yourself so you can leave if it gets to be too much.
- Talk to kids about Christmas – it can be confusing for kids that Christmas can be both happy and sad after a death. Let them know it is okay to enjoy the day, and it is okay to be sad.
- Leave an empty seat at the Christmas table in memory of your loved one.
- If leaving an empty seat is too sad, invite someone who doesn't have family to spend the day with.
- Don't send cards this year if you're not up to or it's too overwhelming.
- Skip or minimise gifts. After a death, material things can seem less meaningful and shopping can seem especially stressful. Talk as a family and decide whether you truly want to exchange gifts this year.
- Put out a photo table with images of your loved one at past celebrations.
- Go to a grief support group. When everyone else looks so excited about Christmas, sometimes it is helpful to talk with others who are struggling.
- Skip (or minimise) the decorations if they are too much this year.
- Remember that crying is okay and this time of the year can be extremely challenging.
- Volunteer in your loved one's memory.
- Ignore people who want to tell you what you "should" do for the day. Listen to yourself, trust yourself, communicate with your family, and do what works for you.
- Watch the food. Food can make us feel better in the short term until we feel like crap later that we ate that whole box of Christmas mince pies. Don't deprive yourself, but be careful that you don't let food become your holiday comfort.
- Watch the booze. Alcohol can become a fast friend when we are grieving. If that Christmas party is getting to be too much, head home instead of to the open bar.
- If you are stressed about making the dinner, ask someone else to cook or buy dinner this year.
- If you are stressed about the crowds at the mall, cut back on gifts or do your shopping online.
- Say yes to help. There will be people who want to help and may offer their support. Take them up on their offers.
- Ask for help. If people aren't offering, ask. This can be super-hard if it isn't your style, but it is important. Asking others to help with cooking, shopping, or decorating can be a big relief.
- Have a moment of silence during your Christmas prayer or toast in memory of your loved one.
- Donate a meal to a family in need through a local church, salvation army, or department of social services.
- Identify the people who will be able to help and support you during the holidays and identify who may cause you more stress. Try to spend more time with the former group and less with the latter.
- Make some quiet time for yourself. Christmas can be hectic, make quiet time for yourself to journal, meditate, listen to music, etc.



- Practice self-care, whatever it is that helps you recharge, do it.
- Prioritise and don't overcommit. When the lead up to Christmas is filled with so many parties, dinners, and events, save your energy for those that are most important. Look at everything you have to do and rank them in order of importance. Plan for the most important and skip the rest.
- Make a list and check it twice. Grief makes it harder for us to concentrate and remember things. If you have a lot going on, make a list even if you aren't usually a list-maker, and write things on the calendar.
- Skip it. Really. If you just can't face Christmas it is okay to take a break this year, or even the next. If you do skip it, still make a plan. Decide if you will still see friends or family, or perhaps settle for a drive and picnic in the country. Do what is right for you!
- Remember, it is okay to have moments of happiness, this doesn't diminish how much you love and miss the person who isn't there this Christmas.

Adapted from 64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/64-tips-grief-at-the-holidays/>



QUOTES AND CONTACTS

Quotes

"You will lose someone you can't live without and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp."

— Anne Lamott

"Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them."

— Leo Tolstoy

"Deep grief sometimes is almost like a specific location, a coordinate on a map of time. When you are standing in that forest of sorrow, you cannot imagine that you could ever find your way to a better place. But if someone can assure you that they themselves have stood in that same place, and now have moved on, sometimes this will bring hope"

— Elizabeth Gilbert, Eat, Pray, Love

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

Donations

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.

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. BTS receives no government funding and all work is undertaken by volunteers.

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.



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