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Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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Calendar of events

Wednesday 15 August - BTS Annual General Meeting

6pm-6.45pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3 (Way Hall), 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking at Care Park, 15 Pitt St. BTS invites all its members to attend the AGM which will be followed by light refreshments. The monthly support meeting will follow. See page 2 for more details. We need your support. We have a couple of retirements and need new faces to fill their roles.

Wednesday 15 August - BTS Monthly Support Meeting

7-9pm, Uniting Communities, Lvl 3, 10 Pitt St, Adelaide. Parking, Care Park, 15 Pitt St (directly opposite). Please call or text the BTS support line on 0468 440 287 if you wish to attend or require further information. These 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. These meetings not only provide the opportunity to share experiences, they present information about the process of loss and grief, and strategies to heal.

Wednesday 19 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.

Wednesday 17 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 4 November - BTS Coffee Morning

10am -12.30pm Botanic Garden Cafe by the lake. 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.

A Welcome from the Chair

Dear All,

Welcome to the third edition of the 2018 Newsletter. It is difficult to believe that in a few weeks we will be having the BTS AGM on the 15th 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.

Finally, I can only reiterate that we need new committee members. I have now been on the committee for over 6 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 15 August, 6pm, 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 strong 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 experience as 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 August. 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 10 September 2018



'Working Together to Prevent Suicide' is the theme of the 2018 World Suicide Prevention Day (10 September). This theme was chosen internationally as it highlights the most essential ingredient for effective global suicide prevention- collaboration. We all have a role to play and together we can collectively address the challenges presented by suicidal behaviour in society today.

On September 10, join with us and many others across the world who are playing their part in the prevention of suicide.

This year's WSPD theme also complements the efforts of our friends on R U OK? Day (13 September) who support taking 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? Day 13 September 2018



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?'

R U OK 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 Week 7-13 October 2018

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Let's take care of it together.



Mental Health Week is an annual, national event that aims to improve community awareness and interest in mental health and wellbeing.

World Mental Health Day is marked every year on 10th October. The theme this year is 'Do You See What I See?'. It challenges perceptions about mental illness in Australia and encourages everyone to look at mental health in a more positive light, in an effort to reduce stigma and make way for more people to seek the help and support they deserve.

Stigma around mental illness due to misunderstanding or prejudice remains an issue in Australia, delaying or preventing people from wanting or feeling able to seek help, and impacting adversely on their lives.

The reality is the vast majority of people affected by mental illness are able to lead independent and contributing lives in the community, with the right treatment and support. With one in five Australians affected, they form part of our close circles of family, friends and colleagues, and interact with us in our communities every day.

TIPS FOR PRACTICING SELF CARE WHEN GRIEVING

1. Identify at least three individuals who are empathetic listeners

The overwhelming sense of finality that comes after the death of a loved one is often jolting and can be a long-lasting remnant of grief. My mother and I were not on good speaking terms at the time of her death and the last exchange with her was a week before she died, asking to postpone a lunch date we had talked about having to patch up our broken relationship.

What became very difficult after her death was the feeling of the “what ifs” and my spouse patiently listened as I cried aloud about how resolution would never come and how hurt I felt. He is a good listener—one who does not speak and interrupt, but sits with you in silence if necessary.

I have a group of girlfriends who I call my cadre of good listeners who listen and then ask questions necessary to help me process and make next step choices. They aren’t silent listeners. They listen, hear and respond. They help me with the task of moving from one emotional place to another.

Finally, I have a friend who is sensitively attuned to body language and does quick check-ins with me, even if I am not talking about me. She asks questions, gives hugs and lets it be known that she is available if I need to talk. I recommend everyone find at least three people who can provide some variation of the empathetic listening skills I’ve described. Finding someone who is aware of body language in addition to the words you speak is a rare find.

If you cannot find these listeners among your friends, consider finding a therapist who can offer talk therapy. Being able to share with someone who cares is an act of self-healing.

2. Hold quiet space for your thoughts

So, we know being able to express through talking is healing. So, is being able to be alone, silent and reflective. When experiencing the death of a loved one, reflection allows you to not only remember the good you experienced with the loved one, but, also, step outside of the drama that sudden death brings, and gain stability over your thoughts.

In quiet times you can focus on your breathing, center your thoughts and pay attention to yourself.

I had to handle the funeral for my mother and coordinate the cremation of her remains, as well as organized finding a lawyer and other details that immediately followed her passing.

Quiet times seemed a luxury. But, it was helpful. It helped me stay centered and once continuously practiced, became a behaviour I could rely on when emotions seemed to well up.

Identify safe spaces for quiet—even if it stepping away and heading to an empty room in a busy house or taking regular walks alone.

3. Be there for others and be present with others

One of the things that have really helped me over this past year has been my commitment to my responsibilities and stepping outside of my grief.

Grief can wrap you up and hold you hostage if you let it. It is self-absorbed and wants you to cater to its incessant reminder that you are now at a loss. You respond to grief’s self-absorbed tendencies like you do with most self-absorbed entities—you take away the attention and direct it somewhere else.

I am lucky to have a strong network of creatives I vibe with and create art with and the environment they help create where expression is the norm has been very healing. I continued to write, share my art and help other artists after my mother’s death which kept me active and took away the attention that grief thrives on.

<https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/3-tips-for-practicing-self-care-when-grieving/>





Self-care in grief: The myth of keeping busy

When experiencing grief keeping busy only serves as a distraction that buries the pain underneath every activity you can pile on top of it. It only helps to make one more day go by which in itself connects to the myth that time heals all wounds. If this were true when someone breaks their leg we would say to them, "Don't be upset, time will heal this wound."

Beyond all this... keeping busy is not self-care.

So, how can we take care of ourselves while grieving? Well, here are a few ways we can truly care for ourselves during this time when we need self-care more than ever:

- Face your feelings – the painful emotions associated with grief are a natural and normal response to loss. You can try and suppress them or hide from them all you want but in the end this will only prolong the grieving process. Acknowledging your pain and taking responsibility for your feelings will help you avoid the complications often associated with unresolved grief such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and health problems.
- Express your feelings – the most effective way to do this is through some tangible or creative expression of your emotions such as journaling, writing a letter expressing your apologies, forgiveness and the significant emotional statements you wish you had said, or art projects celebrating the person's life or what you lost.

- Feel whatever you feel – it's okay to be angry, to yell at God, to cry or not to cry. It's also okay to laugh, to find moments of joy, or to let go when you're ready. Your grief is your own and no one can tell you when you should be "over it" or when to "move on."
- Look after your health but be aware of short-term relievers – these can be food, alcohol/drugs, anger, exercise, TV, movies, books, isolation, sex, shopping, workaholism, etc. Most of these are not harmful, in fact some are healthy, but they become harmful when they are used for the wrong reasons... to cover-up, hide or suppress our grief. Try and get good sleep, try and make healthy food choices, try and be physically active but more importantly allow yourself to grieve as this is the best form of self-care.

by Khadijah Moon,

Adaptation from: <https://whatsyourgrief.com/self-care-and-keeping-busy/>

R U OK? Day 13 September 2018

R U OK?™

A conversation could change a life.



SELF HELP STRATEGIES FOR BEREAVED PEOPLE

When someone significant dies, our lives change in the blink of an eye, and we have no time to rehearse for the roles that are thrust upon us.

For the first few days or even weeks, we may be too preoccupied to think about the change in our circumstances and may be able to avoid looking at the new landscape that has opened up in front of us.

However, after the funeral and everyone's lives seem to go back to normal (except ours), we may be left wondering how we are going to survive.

There are no one size fits all solutions: everyone's circumstances are different and each person grieves differently - however, there are some coping strategies that may be relevant to you and that you might find helpful:

- Firstly, there is no reason for your relationship with the person who has died, to end. Death ends a life but it doesn't end a relationship. If you are used to sharing your day with the person who has died, or emailing them your news, then perhaps continue to do this. Many people continue to have conversations with the person who has died and although this may sound strange, it is less unnatural than being expected to abruptly end the relationship. If you are not comfortable with apparently 'talking to no one' then write down what you want to say.
- If you are religious, it is worth contacting your local church or place of religious denomination. Many have relevant weekly or monthly meetings and if you are not mobile they may be able to arrange for someone to bring you along or visit you in your own home. For some people, relying on family and friends is the best way to cope. But if you are not close to your family, or they are grieving too, you can contact local bereavement services through the internet.
- It is often thoughtlessness that causes people to forget to call rather than ill will and a call from you or a text or e mail to say 'are you free for coffee' is a gentle reminder to them that you are in need of company. Although it is an effort to be proactive it is preferable to spending too much time alone. Perhaps suggest a meeting at your house for lunch or dinner and ask everyone to bring a dish so that you are not forced to do all the preparation at a time when your energy and motivation may be low.
- If you are retired or have time on your hands, look at volunteering. Even if it's just for a few hours a week to start with, it is an excellent way to meet new people in a very natural environment. Volunteering is proven to have enormous physiological benefits. Perhaps pop into a local charity shop and ask if they need any help.





- It is best not to make any significant decisions for twelve months. Decisions made during this time are rarely objective and balanced. If possible put on hold any decision that involves a large expenditure.
- Abnormal behaviour is normal in an abnormal situation. This is something that is worth writing on a post-it note and placing somewhere so that it is rarely out of sight.
- Crying is the body's very clever way of reducing stress and a very natural reaction. It doesn't matter whether it is days, weeks, months or years after the death, if you feel like having a good cry don't question it, just allow it. Your body is telling you that you need the release. Suppressing tears in the long term is not a healthy option. The same applies if you are supporting someone else in their grieving process: it is important to allow them to cry and not try and 'cheer them up'.
- Whatever you are feeling or thinking is probably quite normal considering the unusual set of circumstances. Emotions or lack of emotions, sleeplessness, a constant sense of unreality, and of course a feeling of guilt, which never fails to raise its ugly head. Whatever your thoughts and feelings it is important to know that they are probably quite natural and not to be feared. If you are afraid of your thoughts don't hesitate to get help from your doctor.

Finally, know that you will not always feel as bad as you do now. Getting through each day after a death may feel like a challenge, but by focusing more and more on today and less on yesterday you will make progress. There will be good days and bad days but in time you will find that the good days outweigh the bad. The landscape of your life may have changed dramatically but the changes will slowly start to feel more familiar and one morning you will wake up with the knowledge that you are now able to see beyond tomorrow.

By Judy Carole Kauffmann

<https://www.dyingmatters.org/page/self-help-strategies-bereaved-people>

Mental Health Week 7-13 October 2018

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Let's take care of it together.

Mental health
BEGINS WITH Me

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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