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Calendar of events

Important Notice: Due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 restrictions (and the possibility of them changing daily) the committee has had to take the difficult decision to cancel the BTS Support meeting scheduled for this month, Wednesday 19th August. In lieu of this decision the coffee morning scheduled for Sunday 1st October has been brought forward to Sunday 13th September. Also, if anyone would like to have an individual catch-up please call 0468 440 287

As our constitution requires the AGM to take place within 6 months of our year end March 2020 the BTS AGM will still take place. Should you wish to attend please call or text 0468 440 287 or email support@bts.org.au as places are limited and we may need to change meeting details should the restrictions change.

Wednesday 19th August - BTS Annual General Meeting

6pm-6.45pm, will be held in the Uniting Community building "UCity" 43 Franklin St (cnr Pitt St). Parking is available on street or in Franklin St or Pitt St car parks.

BTS needs your support. We have a couple of retirements and need new faces to fill committee vacancies - See page 3.

Wednesday 19th August - BTS Support Meeting **CANCELLED**

Sunday 13th September - BTS Coffee Morning 10am -12:30pm Botanic Gardens

Botanic Gardens Café (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.

Should you be thinking of attending please call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287.

Wednesday 21st October - BTS Support Meeting

Held in the new Uniting Community building "UCity" 43 Franklin St (cnr Pitt St). Parking is available on street or in Franklin St or Pitt St car parks.

A Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the third edition of the BTS Newsletter for 2020.

The challenging conditions from the beginning of the year with the devastating bushfires seems to have been over-run by the Covid-19 pandemic. Social isolation seems to be increasing as the pandemic drags on. The recent events in Victoria seem to have made us more vigilant, more anxious, more uncertain. Social distancing regulations have seen the committee make the incredibly hard decision to cancel this month's support meeting. We are very disappointed that this decision had to be taken but we could not provide the necessary support with the social distancing rules in place.

We are however holding the AGM. Each month the committee has been meeting (during Covid using Zoom meetings) to ensure that BTS is able to meet its commitments to the suicide bereaved community. This year's committee has performed incredibly well during difficult circumstances. Fund-raising activities had to be curtailed, however BTS is in a strong financial position to be able meet all its costs. Support meetings changed to bi-monthly rather than quarterly, however after the well-attended February meeting we have had to cancel all remaining meetings. Our newsletter continues to be produced quarterly, our website regularly updated and our phone support service continues to receive calls.

Unfortunately, as with all committees, we are losing a couple of committee members this year. Therefore I encourage anyone who may be interested in becoming a committee member to please contact us at or call/text our support line on 0468 440 287. We would welcome any new faces and I am happy to chat to anyone about a role on the committee. There is a nomination form on the next page. Also you will find a proxy form on the next page. Due to Covid-19 restrictions we are limited in the number of people who can attend and would ask that you send through a proxy vote instead.

Finally to all those who have contributed in any way to BTS in the last twelve months – a very big thank you.

With the kindest of thoughts.

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)

thank you!

BTS AGM

On Wednesday, 19th August, at 6pm we will be holding our Annual General Meeting.

The AGM is not only a statutory requirement of our being an incorporated body and an association in law, but also an important renewal of our structure and organisation.

Any group or organisation only operates, flourishes and grows as a consequence of the willingness of its' members to contribute to its' welfare. The health of any organisation is only a product of the goodwill and support that it receives from volunteers and workers who are prepared to pitch in and work for the common good.

If you feel that you'd be willing to have a go, to pitch in and help, then you'd be very welcome to join the Committee. Fill in the form on this page (the current committee can act as nominator and seconder) or call BTS on **0468 440 287** to discuss. Not only the other members of the Committee, but indeed everyone in the BTS community, would be very grateful for your contribution

PROXY FORM

Please scan this proxy form for the AGM, sign and email to support@bts.org.au

Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc.

ABN 98 234 807 789

PO 4090, Norwood South SA 5067

Ph: 0468 440 287

Email support: [Support@bts.org.au](mailto:support@bts.org.au)

www.bts.org.au

Date:

To Executive Committee:

I hereby authorise Tim Porter as proxy holder for the Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group at its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 19th August, 2020 to vote my interest, or refrain from voting, on any matters brought before the BTSSG AGM as he deems appropriate.

Sincerely

Signed

Print Name

BTS SUPPORT GROUP INC. COMMITTEE NOMINATION

Please consider standing for the BTS committee. Scan this form, write your name on the nominee line and in the acceptance area and email to support@bts.org.au or call 0468 440 287. Current committee members can propose and second.

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

Your nomination can be proposed by existing committee members. Nomination (Please Print Clearly) I, (name of member proposing)

.....

Phone (h).....(M) Email and I (name of member seconding) Phone (h).....

(M) Email

Nominate (name of nominee)

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

Nominator Date Secunder

Date Nomination Acceptance I (nominee) accept the nomination as indicated above.

Nominee's signature Date

SUPPORTING CHILDREN (re-print from SobsUK)

Breaking the news to children brings its own particular problems and fears.

As parents in shock, the task can be made harder by your own grief and the fear that you will not say the right things or be unable to understand and meet your child's needs. You will usually be the best person to talk to your child, but sometimes a close family member can be a good choice to break the news initially.

When children are told that someone has decided to die, similar problems of comprehension arise as those for adults: questions that are asked when a death is 'natural' become even more difficult and painful to answer when death is by suicide, particularly 'How did it happen?' and 'Why?'. When survivors are young we are afraid we may be putting frightening ideas into their heads.

If the person who died was your son or daughter, you may also be worried that your surviving children are in danger of dying from suicide. This worry can lead to over-protectiveness (even when your surviving children are adult). "My younger daughter became so precious to me and I needed to know that she was OK all the time. I had to stop myself from restricting her. We did become closer as a result of our shared experience, but in a strange way our journeys were separate, different."

Telling the truth

Honesty is widely recognised to be the best approach. This does not mean giving children every detail, but gently giving them enough information, in language they understand to enable them to grasp what has happened and to ask the questions they need answers to. You need to choose your words carefully when describing to children what has happened. Usually, the message you want to convey is that the person thought that dying was the only path they could take, but that they were wrong and were not thinking straight because they were unwell. Use of words like 'chose to die' may imply to a child that death is a more pleasurable option than living: 'decided to die' may imply that the act was a rational one – when it often was not. 'Decided that the only thing they could do was die – but of course they were unwell/we don't agree with that because....' are possible forms to use.

Children need to know that they can trust us. It can be tempting to hide the truth, thinking this is kinder for the child, when in fact it is often just easier for us. But the truth can be very difficult to keep hidden and may be revealed by someone else in an insensitive or thoughtless way – possibly even in the playground. Also, secrecy makes it difficult to talk about the things you need to.

Fear of further loss can be a great worry for some children – that other family members will leave them. They need reassurance from someone they can trust; a lack of honesty will damage the confidence they have in you.

How much do I tell a child?

Many young children deal with their grief in bursts and so may appear to recover quickly. However, they may have additional questions once they have absorbed what they have already been told.

They need you to be patient and to help them deal with what has happened at their own pace, and hard as it may be, sometimes actually to create the opportunity for them to ask questions and talk about their fears.

Children often think it is something they have done that made someone decide they couldn't bear their life any longer. As adults, we must do all we can not to add to their worry by saying or implying that a child is somehow to blame. This is a terrible burden for a child to carry. For more detail on how to talk to children after a suicide, see the reading list at the end of the section.

How much will the child understand?

Children as young as two often have some understanding of death, but up to the age of five do not usually understand the concept of 'gone forever'. They may expect the person who has died to come back sometime. The lengthening absence increases the child's feeling of insecurity. At around ages five to nine, children may understand that death is forever, but struggle to understand that this can happen to them and their family. Between ages nine and eleven, it is likely that a child will understand the irreversibility of death and will try to cope with events – or give the appearance of coping.

Changes in a child's behaviour

Children do not all react in the same way, but be prepared for some changes as they try to adapt to what has happened. They will feel many of the emotions and reactions that adults do, such as grief, anger, anxiety and guilt; but they are likely also to seek attention and security in a number of ways. For example, they may be clinging, or revert to more childish behaviours (such as baby speech or wetting the bed); hide or run away, behave aggressively, or copy the behaviours of the dead person. Be patient and do what you can to make children believe that they are safe even though something terrible has happened.

The funeral

Once you know when the funeral will be, talk to your children about what will be happening. Let them choose what they do. Viewing the body or attending the funeral can be important to some children – it is their opportunity to acknowledge and accept the death – but they need to be told beforehand what to expect.

"I wanted to see him to make his death seem real to me. And knowing my imagination, I thought that what I imagined might be much worse than what he actually looked like – what the rope had done to him and so on. I didn't want to be left with a terrible picture that wasn't real."

Returning to school

At school, children may face a number of difficult situations. They will have trouble concentrating on school or home-work, and some topics may prove difficult to deal with. Worst of all, they may have to cope with thoughtless or malicious comments from other children, such as: "Why don't you do what your dad did?"

We know of several cases where these words have been said, and the words can sometimes be backed up with press cuttings your child was not aware of.



The effects of all this may be worse if you have not been truthful about what happened. It helps to tell the school what has happened. Let your child know you have done this so that they know they don't need to tell their teacher. Some schools have a teacher with special responsibility for dealing with bereaved children.

Summary – things to remember

- Your honesty and availability are essential to the child.
- Children must know they can trust you.
- Prevarication can cause real problems both now and in the future.
- Are you protecting yourself or them?
- Focus on what the child needs to know, not on what you think you can bear to tell them.
- Information needs to be at the level children understand, in language appropriate to their age.
- If the child is old enough, he or she may want to make decisions about funeral attendance and so on.
- Don't blame the children or let the children blame themselves for the death.
- The school needs to be informed; ask whether there is a teacher with special responsibility for bereavement.

Reading that may help you

Cruse Bereavement Care leaflet. Has someone died?

Helping children. Available from www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Dyregrov, A. (1991) *Grief in Children. A Handbook for Adults*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Goldman, L. (2001) *Breaking the Silence. A Guide to Helping Children with Complicated Grief*. 2nd edn. Hove: Routledge

Stokes, J A and Stubbs, D (2008) *Beyond the Rough Rock: Supporting a Child Who Has Been Bereaved Through Suicide*. 2nd edn. Winston's Wish

Webster, B *Help Me...If You Can*. The Centre for the Grief Journey. Available from www.griefjourney.com

Wolfelt, A D (2001) *Healing a Teen's Grieving Heart*. Companion Press

Worden, J W (2001) *Children and Grief – When a Parent Dies*. Guilford Publications

<https://uksobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Support-after-Suicide-Booklet-V5-10-2019.pdf>



Conversations Matter when telling a child about a suicide

There has been a death by suicide and I need to inform a child: What do I say? What do I do?

Children can learn about suicide in a range of ways – they may overhear adult conversations, hear about it in the media, or have someone in their family, kinship group or community die by suicide.

When a child needs to be informed of a death, it can be difficult to know what to say and how to explain it.

A first response may be to say nothing or avoid the conversation, but children can realise that something is happening around them even if they do not know exactly what. If the issue is not explained, the child might form the wrong idea.

You may be thinking...

"I can't possibly find the right words to explain this."

"Maybe it would be better not to say anything."

"I don't want them to think it's their fault."

They may be thinking...

"Something bad has happened but no one is talking to me."

"I am worried."

"Maybe I've done something wrong."

This resource provides some basic tips for telling a child about a suicide. It is designed specifically for parents or primary care-givers but the information may be useful for other adults. It is not meant to be comprehensive. If you need further advice or support you can refer to one of the services or resources included at the end of this document.

Things to remember:

- ✓ Tell the child as soon as possible
- ✓ Understand that grief can be different for children
- ✓ Find out what they know about death
- ✓ Tell them about the suicide
- ✓ Keep it simple and use words they will understand
- ✓ Use non-judgemental language
- ✓ It is ok to show emotions
- ✓ Help the child talk to others
- ✓ Look after yourself
- ✓ Learn about other services and resources that are available.

For the remainder of this article, please visit:

<http://www.conversationsmatter.com.au/resources-community/telling-a-child-about-suicide>



The 5-4-3-2-1 Coping Technique

Ease your state of mind in stressful moments.

Acknowledge **5** things that you can see around you.



Acknowledge **4** things that you can touch around you.



Acknowledge **3** things that you can hear around you.

Acknowledge **1** thing that you can taste around you.



Acknowledge **2** things that you can smell around you.



#DeStressMonday

DeStressMonday.org

**DESTRESS
MONDAY**

LET'S TRY IT - Even if it's not Monday. Print this page if you would like to complete.

Acknowledge 5 things that you can SEE around you.

Acknowledge 4 things that you can TOUCH around you.

Acknowledge 3 things that you can HEAR around you.

Acknowledge 2 things that you can SMELL around you.

Acknowledge 1 thing that you can TASTE around you.

How are you feeling now?

QUOTATIONS ON GRIEF

"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

"To weep is to make less the depth of grief."

William Shakespeare

"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

"No matter how bad your heart is broken, the world doesn't stop for your grief."

Faraaz Kazi

"Everyone grieves in different ways. For some, it could take longer or shorter. I do know it never disappears. An ember still smolders inside me. Most days, I don't notice it, but, out of the blue, it'll flare to life."

Maria V. Snyder

"Whoever said that loss gets easier with time was a liar. Here's what really happens: The spaces between the times you miss them grow longer. Then, when you do remember to miss them again, it's still with a stabbing pain to the heart. And you have guilt. Guilt because it's been too long since you missed them last."

Kristin O'Donnell Tubb

"The weird, weird thing about devastating loss is that life actually goes on. When you're faced with a tragedy, a loss so huge that you have no idea how you can live through it, somehow, the world keeps turning, the seconds keep ticking."

James Patterson



As I sit in heaven

As I sit in heaven,
And watch you every day,
I try to let you know the signs,
that I never went away,
I hear you when you're laughing,
And watch you as you sleep,
I even place my arms around you,
Try to calm you as you weep,
I see you wish the days away,
Begging to have me home,
So I try to send you signs,
So you know you're not alone,
Don't feel guilty that you have,
Life that was denied for me,
Heaven is truly beautiful,
Just you wait and see,
So live your life, laugh again,
Enjoy yourself, be free,
Then I know with every breath you take,
You'll be taking one for me!

Author unknown

Reflection

Another day for you to wonder, another day for you to mourn
It wasn't my intention to go before the coming dawn
My pain was deep within my heart and troubled head
It wasn't my intention to go without words said.
My frame of mind seemed normal, or so I heard them say

It wasn't my intention not to see another day
I did not mean to make you suffer or cause you so much pain

It wasn't my intention to never see you again.
Despair and confusion left my aching mind unsure
It wasn't my intention to suddenly close life's door
If only I could give you reasons and brush the tears away

It wasn't my intention to leave and not stay.
I did not mean for you to grieve, now left alone to cry
It wasn't my intention to leave you, forever asking why
As the burdens of life's worries slowly ebb from my heart

It wasn't my intention to tear your soul apart

Author unknown

Where do they go to, when no longer here?

I think that they stay with us, calming our fear
Loving us always, holding our hands
Walking beside us, on grass or on sand.
Where do they go to, well it's my belief
They watch us and help us to cope with our grief
They comfort and stay with us, through each of our days
Guiding us always through life's mortal maze.

Kev F - 21st August 2007

My Constant Companion

Grief is my companion,
It takes me by the hand,
And walks along beside me
in a dark and barren land.
How long will this lonesome journey last,
How much more can my weary heart bear?
Since your death, I've been lost in the fog,
Too burdened with sorrow and care.
People tell me my sadness will fade,
And my tears will reach their end.
Grief and I must complete our journey,
And then maybe I'll find happiness again.
Where do they go to?
Where do they go to, the people who leave?
Are they around us, in the cool evening breeze?
Do they still hear us, and watch us each day?
I'd like you to think of them with us that way.

Anon

A Mother's Pain

She feels she may go insane
Her tears are now more like rain
As she peers out above the tissues
Her sobbing now becomes an issue

She can't control how she feels
She wants to believe it's all not real
Many pray that time will heal
But a Mother's grief you can not steal

She's lost her child, her heart, her soul
She walks this earth with this empty hole
She's tossed, she's turned, she doesn't sleep
All she does is weep and weep

As she walks in this daily fog
She tries to make a deal with God
Let me see my child again
One more time, PLEASE... Amen

A Mother's love will never end
Her broken heart will never mend
She tries, and tries, and tries in vain
To rid herself of this horrible pain

Dianna L K. Casey

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: 0468 440 287
from 8am - 8pm

Email support service: support@bts.org.au
Suicide bereavement resources: www.bts.org.au

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.

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. 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 you can directly EFT to: **BTS Support Group BSB: 633-000 A/C: 148312366** Tax deductible receipts will be issued.

Thank you in advance for supporting our very worthy organisation.



Additional Support Services

NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Lifeline	13 11 14
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
Beyondblue	1300 22 4636
Mensline	1300 789 978
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467

OTHER SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT SERVICES

Living Beyond Suicide (LBS)	between 10am–10pm any day.	1300 76 11 93
Minimisation Of Suicide Harm (MOSH)		8443 8369
Country SA – Standby Response	North	0438 728 644
Country SA – Standby Response	South	0437 752 458
Silent Ripples	Murray Bridge	0417 741 888

Thank you

A big thank you to Mandy Porter Photography and Monsigneur Creative for their ongoing support with the newsletter and to Uniting Communities "Ucity" for providing the facilities to hold our support meetings.