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Calendar of events

Sunday 6th December - 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.

Due to Covid restrictions should you wish to attend please call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287 as numbers will be limited.

February BTS Support Meeting

Our first support meeting for 2021 will be held at "UCity" 43 Franklin St (cnr Pitt St) on Level 3. The date of the meeting is still to be finalised and will be detailed in the Q1 newsletter and website.

Parking is available on street or in Franklin St or Pitt St car parks.

The meeting is for those bereaved through suicide and is facilitated by trained support workers who have themselves been bereaved through suicide. The meeting offers the opportunity to express one's feelings in an environment that is caring and safe.

Please call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287 if you wish to attend or require further information.

A Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the fourth quarter edition of the BTS Newsletter for 2020.

2020 has been a most challenging year for many of us, particularly for those of you who we have met who are newly bereaved. The Covid virus which has certainly led to increased anxiety and loneliness.

Many in our community find the upcoming Christmas/holiday period the most disconcerting of times. We can only hope that the removal of restrictions relating to Covid allows us to gather with family and/or friends or, if we wish, to be on our own and remember those we have lost. You will find this newsletter has articles to some helpful tips.

Unfortunately BTS has only been able to hold a couple of support meetings this year due to Covid restrictions, although we have managed to have a few well attended mornings teas at the Adelaide Botanical Gardens.

Producing this edition was not without its challenges with some of the team experiencing unexpected illnesses coupled with not knowing what would happen with the Covid restrictions. I am sure that many of us will be glad when 2020 comes to end and look forward to 2021 arriving.

On behalf of the support volunteers and committee we ask that you take good care and be kind to yourself, your families and those around you through this Christmas/New Year period.

With the kindest of thoughts.

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)



COPING DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

We're here to provide support for your mental wellbeing.

Struggling to cope during the pandemic?
Our trained counsellors are available 24/7.
Give them a call on **1800 512 348**



We recognise that many of us here in the community are feeling scared, worried and overwhelmed about the Coronavirus (COVID19) outbreak.

Just as we have come together here during other difficult times, we encourage those wanting to share or seek helpful support to do so here in this space.

What are you doing to look after your wellbeing during this time? Sharing is one of the most helpful ways we can support one other – our community is also here to support you if you'd simply like to share how you're feeling.

It is important we maintain perspective and support each other as best as we can, everyone here at Beyond Blue would like to remind our community that medical, scientific and public health experts around the world are working hard to contain the virus, treat those affected and develop a vaccine as quickly as possible.

The Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Service is available 24/7 at coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au. There is a dedicated phone line, staffed by mental health professionals briefed on the pandemic response, that is also now open on 1800 512 348.

Beyond Blue's existing support service will continue to operate alongside the new service. The Beyond Blue Support Service is available via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).

There are some other helpful discussions taking place here within our forum community that you may find helpful to read or participate in:

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/online-forums/staying-well/hi-there-i-only-just-joined-and-i'm-worried-about-the-coronavirus>

As a community, let's help one another through sharing and connecting and showing our support.

Sophie_M
Beyond Blue Community Moderator



EVERYDAYPOWERBLOG.COM

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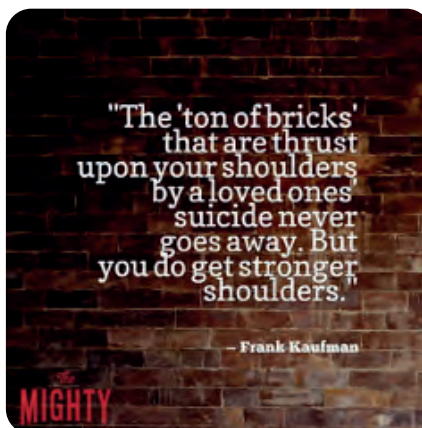
Grief is not a disorder, a disease, or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical, and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.

EARL GROLLMAN



"The 'ton of bricks' that are thrust upon your shoulders by a loved one's suicide never goes away. But you do get stronger shoulders."

— Frank Kaufman



“A person never truly gets 'over' a suicide loss. You get through it. Day by day. Sometimes it's moment by moment.”

— Holly Kohler



TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH CHRISTMAS

*** 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 favorite 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/>



TO THE NEWLY BEREAVED

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

**“Give sorrow words.
Grief has need to speak,
lest whisper the o'er
fraught heart and bid
it break”.**

William Shakespeare/MacBeth

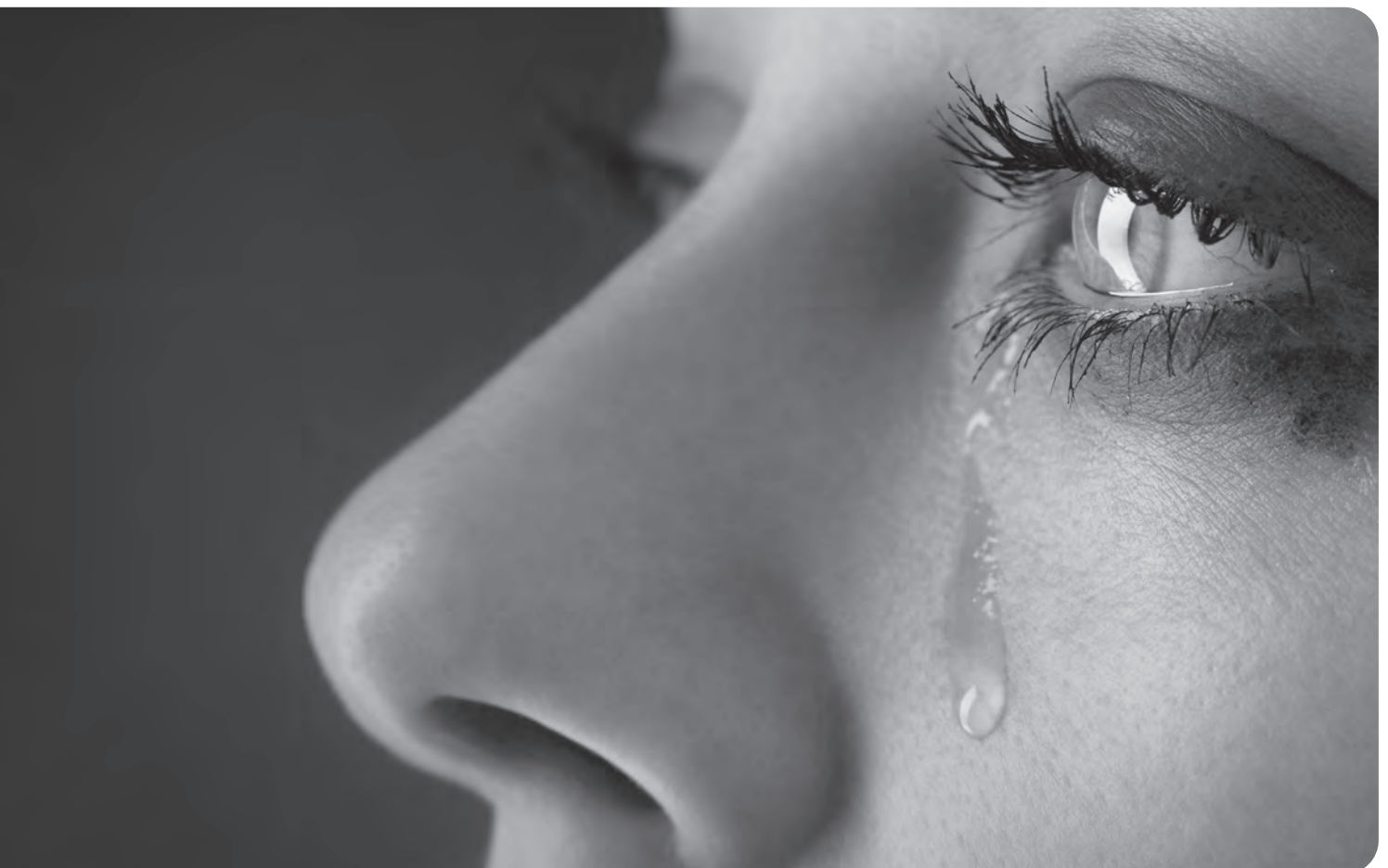
1. Talk! Talk! Talk! Speak of your pain, your loss and the cause of it as long and as often as you need to speak of it.
2. Be with your grief. Don't suppress, avoid or postpone grief's expression. Let yourself feel it! Cry! Tears are cathartic and cleansing. Friends/extended family feel helpless faced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



10. Grief and the workplace. For many bereaved it is an economic necessity to return to work soon after the funeral. Others return to work soon as a means of keeping mentally occupied and find solace in their work. Some postpone returning to their job fearing the additional stress created by work. Work can be helpful in restoring routine in one's life. Most employers are compassionate and sympathetic. Some have first hand knowledge of loss and grief and extend encouragement and understanding. Others have a very unrealistic view of how long it takes to "get over" a family members death and may not be tolerant of mistakes, distraction or quick trips to the bathroom to dry tears. It can be helpful to discuss your limits and concerns with your employer, perhaps arriving at a compromise whereby you work a few hours a day when you first return to the workplace. It is also helpful when an employer engages a counselor to speak of suicide bereavement with fellow employees placing them at greater ease in offering you support.
11. Suicidal thoughts are scary. When someone we love dies we are overwhelmed by the pain of loss and fear of the future without them. We may believe we cannot endure the intensity of the pain. For a time, we may not wish to. When the cause of death is suicide the surviving family members have been shown the worst possible example of how one can end pain and problems and the survivor may view ending their life as a way to stop hurting. It is normal to

want to escape the pain of loss and grief. It is not abnormal to think of ending one's own life to escape it. But there is considerable difference between having suicidal thoughts and acting upon them. If you are obsessed with thoughts of killing yourself, begin to seriously consider ways of ending your life or believe you don't deserve to live due to some circumstance surrounding the loved one's death, see a mental health professional without delay. It would be a grave injustice to compound the loss and magnify the grief of others by this manner of resolving your own.

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



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

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