

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are advised that the Annual General Meeting of The Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group will be held on Wednesday 18th August at U City, 43 Franklin Street, Adelaide, (3rd floor meeting room) commencing at 6.00pm.



Calendar of events

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Wednesday 18th August - BTS Annual General Meeting

6pm-6.45pm, will be held in the Uniting Community building "UCity" 43 Franklin St (cnr Pitt St) - Level 1. Parking is available on street or in Franklin St or Pitt St car parks.

BTS invites all its members to attend the AGM which will be followed by light refreshments. The monthly support meeting will follow. Should you wish to attend call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287 as number are restricted due to Covid-19 restrictions.

BTS needs new committee members. We have a number of committee members retiring this year and without new members joining the committee BTS may struggle into the future. Please consider standing. Our Chair, Tim Porter is more than happy to discuss the role of a committee person. Call on the BTS support line 0468 440 287 or fill in the nomination form on page 3 and email to support@bts.org.au.

Wednesday 18th August - BTS Support Meeting

7-9pm, will be held in the Uniting Community building "UCity" 43 Franklin St (cnr Pitt St). Please register at reception and they will direct you to the 3rd floor meeting room. 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. Besides providing the opportunity to share experiences, the meeting presents information about the process of loss and grief, and strategies to heal.

Should you wish to attend call or text the BTS Support line on 0468 440 287 as number are restricted due to Covid-19 restrictions.

A Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the third quarter edition of the BTS Newsletter for 2021.

On the 18th August BTS will be holding it's Annual General Meeting. If you are unable to attend please use the proxy form below for the Chair to represent you. Fill in, scan/copy and email to support@bts.org.au.

Without an injection of new committee members and persons willing to volunteer at the support meetings the future of BTS is not assured. We have a number of committee members retiring this year and without new members joining the committee BTS may struggle into the future. Please consider standing. Our Chair, Tim Porter is more than happy to discuss the roles of the committee in person. As always should you like to discuss the committee roles give our support line a call/text 0468 440 287 or email to support@bts.org.au.

The nature of how best support those bereaved through suicide into the future has been a major discussion for the committee throughout 2020 and into 2021. The committee strongly feels that to take BTS into the future that we need new committee members with new ideas and a continued commitment to support those bereaved by suicide. A refreshed committee can look at how best BTS can provide the services to support the bereaved community in a post-Covid world.

After 9 years on the committee (8 years as Chair) it is time to step aside and let others take a role in the future of BTS. As well a couple of long serving committee members including our treasurer will retire, so at the August AGM BTS will be seeking to fill a number of vacant committee positions. Fortunately we have already found a new treasurer but need more committee members.

We are also seeking new support workers who can provide support at our meetings. We have a small dedicated group who run our meetings but they need people to help with the setting/packing up of meetings and providing support when necessary during the meeting. Should you like to discuss the support roles give our phone line a call/text or email to support@bts.org.au.

May we all travel safely through the remainder of 2021 and take care of ourselves and those around us.

With the kindest of thoughts,

Tim Porter

(on behalf of BTS volunteers and committee)

PROXY FORM

Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc.

PO 4090, Norwood South SA 5067

Ph: 0468 440 287

Email support: Support@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 18th August, 2021 to vote my interest, or refrain from voting, on any matters brought before the BTSSG AGM as he deems appropriate.

Sincerely

Signed _____

Print Name _____

NOTICE OF BTS SUPPORT GROUP AGM

On Wednesday, 18th August, at 6pm BTSSG will be holding our Annual General Meeting prior to our support 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 it's members to contribute to it's 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 below (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

BTS Support Group Inc. Committee Nomination

Nominations are invited for the election of Bereaved Through Suicide Support Group Inc.

Committee and office bearers, 2021-22.

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)

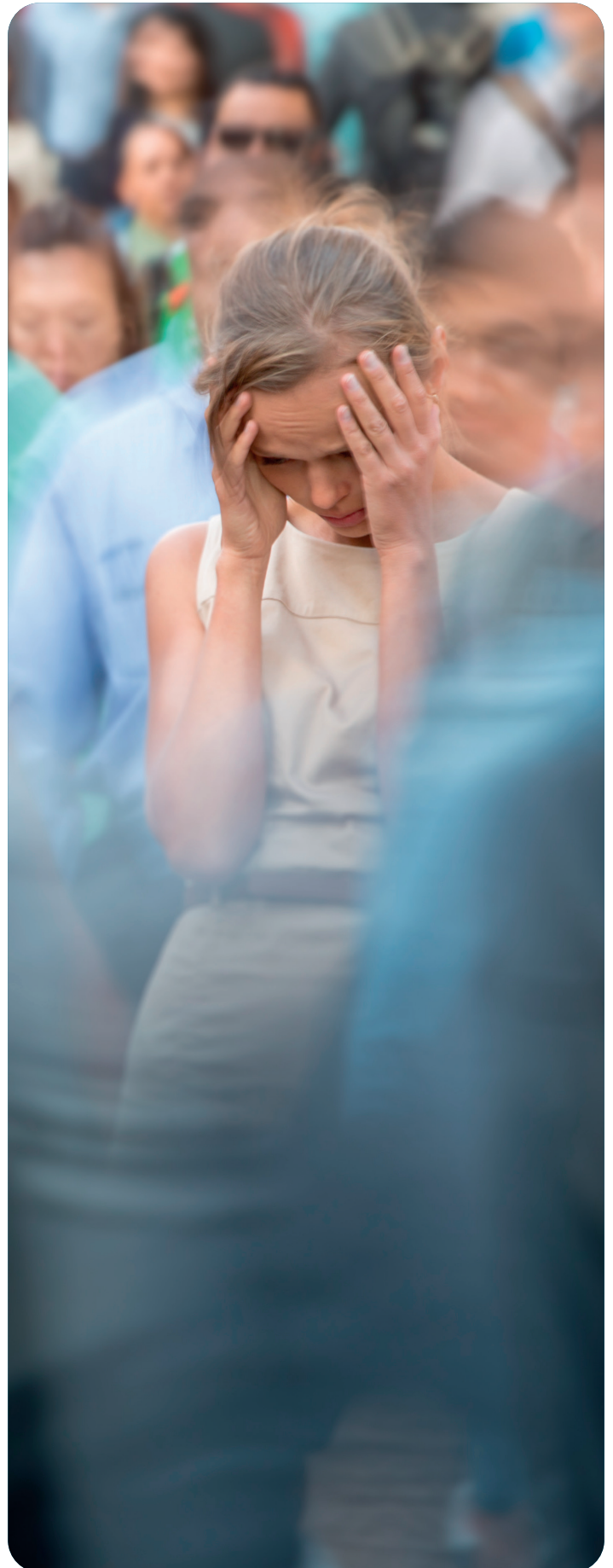
accept the nomination as indicated above Nominee's signature

Date

These messages were collated from others bereaved by suicide

If you've recently lost a loved one to suicide, these might be words you need to hear:

1. "Allow yourself as long as you need to grieve. We all grieve in our own time in our own way."
2. "A person never truly gets 'over' a suicide loss. You get through it. Day by day. Sometimes it's moment by moment."
3. "Know it wasn't your fault. Know someday you may take comfort in educating people about suicide."
4. "Everyone will have a different journey."
5. "Loss from suicide is like no other loss, and there's no time limit for grieving. Allow yourself that time to process. And then talk to someone, anyone."
6. "Please reach out. Speak up. The worst thing you could do is to stay silent, like I did for so many years."
7. "If you've lost a loved one to suicide — even if you, yourself, have dealt with depression and suicidal ideation — you may often wonder why. And that's OK. Allow yourself that space."
8. "When I lost my brother to suicide, the most helpful thing for me was being part of a support group. Through that support I learned to honor my brother's life and the wonderful person he was by sharing stories."
9. "Continue to live your life, know that it's OK to smile again. Don't ever be ashamed or let anyone make you feel ashamed."
10. "Read books written by other survivors. Write."
11. "One day you'll wake up and things won't hurt as bad. You'll be able to remember the good things about your friend and not just the end. For me, that's when I knew I was finally able to move on."
12. "One thing I learned is however I decided to grieve is the right way for me. Everyone's different."
13. "Don't become a statistic yourself. Get counseling and be open to psychiatry if you need it."
14. "Be patient with yourself. One day you'll be able to celebrate the life and not focus on the method of death. Please, please, just be patient."
15. "The best piece of advice I got was, 'Once you accept that many, if not most, of your questions will never be answered, you can start to move forward.'"
16. "You will survive, and you will find purpose in the chaos. Moving on doesn't mean letting go."
17. "So far, the best thing for me has been advocating during difficult times for prevention. It helps me to focus on the positive."
18. "The 'ton of bricks' that are thrust upon your shoulders by a loved ones' suicide never goes away. But you do get stronger shoulders."



GETTING THROUGH THOSE TRIGGERS!

When we lose a loved one, the time we spend dealing with sadness surrounding that loss can vary daily, hourly or even minute-by-minute. As time goes by, the expectation we have and what generally occurs, is that the sad thoughts spread themselves out further and further apart. We learn to adjust to life moving on and us having to move with it. Simply said, but not easily done. What happens to us emotionally, and how we manage the “triggers” that follow our “adjustment to life” can be another matter entirely.

What is a trigger? This is an occasion, an event, an artifact, a physical resemblance or even a phrase that throws us back into the realm of missing that one person so intensely that we do another deep dive into loss, even for a little while. A trigger can crash and crush you all over again. Is this normal? Generally. Is this unhealthy? It could be, if it is extreme, prolonged and unaddressed. Is this reaction avoidable? Maybe not, but there are really healthy and helpful ways to avoid the crush of it. It can be managed in such a way that it no longer paralyzes, and can actually generate a pleasant acceptance and joy.

I have talked with so many others who plunge into some degree of depression at holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and vacations. If the exact date is not enough to spawn sadness and withdrawal, the impending date can be just as bad for producing a reaction.

After losing my son Drew to suicide in 2011, I had a number of triggers that sent me reeling. Christmas was one, his birthday was another; and perhaps one of the most difficult of all – seeing a mother talking, walking and hugging her son. My thoughts were awful – what right does that mother have to happiness when my joy around my child was gone forever? Similarly, the holiday celebration left us with this enormous vacant space where Drew should have been. And finally, what do we do as his birthday date and his death date approached within that first year following? For many, succeeding years are every bit as heartbreaking as the first one.

So, let's get to the best answer for these very important questions. You may not embrace it right at first; but read on, keep an open mind and then allow it to reside within you, until you can see some wisdom hiding there.

CELEBRATE! Celebrate all of it. Celebrate the birthday, the anniversary, the holiday of your choice, the vacation spot, the athletic event.

1. **Date of Loss:** Perhaps you are asking how you can possibly celebrate the date of loss; how indeed? Won't this truly hurt me even more? Isn't there something morally out-of-place about focusing on my loved one's date of passing? If you think clearly about what you may be doing now and have been doing each year, isn't it more damaging to your memory to rage angry and depressive, when the opportunity to remember gently and with a hopeful outlook actually exists? I am here to tell you that on or near the date that Drew took his life, my family practice a “pay-it-forward” in which we do something generous, healthy and memorable for someone in need. Instead of hiding, we emerge with a joyous purpose. Instead of sadness and lethargy, we shed tears of joy for others who are about to benefit from our time and energy for the better.

2. **Birthday:** On that first birthday following Drew's death, his children, wife, sister and friends all came together with 3

enormous undecorated cakes. We brought every type of frosting, jimmies, candy stars, sprinkles, sugar decorations, iced lettering and 100 candles in all kinds of shapes and sizes. We put on Drew's favorite music really loud and everyone, especially the children, began decorating these cakes until they were beyond description. Lighting the candles almost set the fire alarms off from the heat! Everyone wished him a Happy Birthday and blew out every candle for him. Lastly, all of the most important people in Drew's life danced around the kitchen to the music he loved the best. Somehow we knew he was listening and celebrating with us. If a birthday remembrance such as this is not within your realm of possibility, then get a cupcake, make a list of all the most cherished and memorable birthdays from years past, then wish your loved one a joyful thought. You may not want to do something each and every year, but that first one can be devastatingly difficult or surprisingly familiar and happy.

3. **Holidays:** Collect memorabilia and photos from holidays past. Pass them around to your guests and ask them to comment on what they remember about those very events; encourage stories that no one knows about and would like to share. Laugh when you learn the answer to things that were heretofore a mystery. Include Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and such. Decorate the holiday/event with items that belonged to your loved one and should be on display. Art, Christmas stockings, flags, costumes, beach balls – you will know what to choose.

4. **Anniversary:** If you have lost your spouse and your anniversary date is one that produces despondence and isolation, try something new to greet the day. Make a list of some of the best ways you spent time with your beloved spouse when they were with you. Perhaps there was a favorite restaurant you would eat at, a vacation spot you would go to, an event you would attend or an activity that you did together. Now ask a friend who knows you and your loved one well, and ask them to do it with you. Plan the day and bring really great memories of those times, and discuss with your new companion the fun and the energy that took place. Buy a token or artifact of the new experience and put it (them) in a cherished place of honor.

So many times people would ask me, “Aren't you sad when Drew's birthday comes around, or when Christmas takes place?” My response is, “I don't focus on what I don't have now. I cherish the 41 years that he was in my life and we did these wonderful things as a family. I remember it all and share it all.”

by: Gabrielle Doucet

<https://www.opentohope.com/getting-through-those-triggers/>



CONTINUING BONDS WITH THOSE WE HAVE LOST...

During the first part of the twentieth century, the prevailing models and theories of grief suggested that mourners would flow nicely through “stages,” engage in grief “tasks” and eventually come to a place of closure, detachment from loss, or moving on. The bereaved were encouraged to “get past” the death of a loved one by detaching on an emotional level. Once freed from grief, a person could reinvest his or her energy elsewhere. Those unable to do this, might suffer from “pathological grief.”

In 1966 however, researchers Klass, Silverman, and Nickman challenged prevailing models of grief. They published a book called “Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief.” Their theory suggested that healthy grievers did not resolve grief by detaching from the deceased but by creating a new relationship with the deceased.

Their theory of Continuing Bonds, makes intuitive sense to most who have lost someone near and dear. The deceased do not disappear from our lives. They are still beloved members of our families, still beloved friends. We learn new ways to relate and relationships continue as we continue, grow, and evolve.

We are finally realizing that healthy grief might involve finding a new and different relationship with the person who died.

Ways to Continue Bonds with a Loved One

If you feel that the Continuing Bonds Theory makes a lot of sense in your own life and style of grief, you might also be looking for ways to continue a bond with your deceased loved one. Here are some ideas that you might want to try as you implement this theory in your life.

- Talk with your loved one. Go ahead! Do it! It doesn't mean you're crazy and is completely okay! This is not only a natural thing to do but it can also bring so much comfort to you in the moments that you miss them the most. So talk away, no matter if it is out loud or in your head. This is a very common and normal way to continue your relationship with your loved one.
- Write your loved one a letter. There is no right or wrong way to do this. Write a letter on the computer, in a journal, or on letterhead or stationery. You can keep these letters or get rid of them. You can get creative with them. No matter what you choose to do or how often you choose to write, this can be a great way to stay close to your loved one.
- Keep their photos around. Of course, this might seem incredibly obvious, but I can tell you that there are going to be people who will make you feel like you are doing something wrong. Keeping photos around will keep your loved one present in your life and it will provide continuing influence of their presence in your household.
- Involve your loved one in special events, holidays, and annual traditions. Consider leaving an empty chair for the individual at Thanksgiving dinner, get out old home videos, or make dishes that your loved ones always enjoyed. You are going to naturally think of them on these days, don't feel like you have to bottle up those thoughts or emotions. Express yourself in any way that allows you to keep the person close to you.
- Imagine how they would have given you advice or what they would have said if you had a question that you couldn't find an answer for. It's easy to feel overwhelmed when you suddenly have to make big decisions on your own that you might have made before with the help of your loved one.

Imagine a conversation with them and put yourself in their shoes to think about what they might have said to you.

- Discuss your loved one with new people in your life. You are going to meet people who never knew your loved one. Know that it's okay to tell these people about the deceased and don't hesitate to share photos or stories. This will help you keep your loved one's legacy alive as you move forward and change as a person yourself.

No matter if the person you lost was a spouse, life partner, parent, grandparent, sibling, child, or friend, it's easy to struggle when you realize that this person won't be there to celebrate milestones, accomplishments, and achievements with you. I suggest you think about applying the Continuing Bonds Theory to simply live your life so that your loved one would be proud.

Mary Ellen Wasielewski

<https://allianceofhope.org/finding-new-and-different-ways-to-continue-the-bond/?source=Continuing%20Bonds>





Secondary Wounds

Loss from suicide creates an immediate and gaping hole in the hearts and lives of survivors. Aftershocks may reverberate long after the funeral is over. While friends and acquaintances return to their everyday lives, those closest to the deceased often struggle with painful emotions for a long time.

Most survivors experience an enormous amount of kindness, from friends, family and community members. People often reach out in unexpected and generous ways. There are times however, when others may not deal as sensitively with what happened as one might hope. Whether intentional or unintentional, lack of support, hurtful comments or intentional blame, has a profound impact on survivors who are already raw with grief and guilt.

Secondary wounding can occur in a number of ways including:

Denial and Disbelief:

Sometimes, survivors relate information about the suicide or subsequent events to others, but are not fully understood or believed. For example, they may be told: “that couldn’t have really happened that way –you were just confused.”

Discounting and Minimising:

On other occasions survivors’ grief may be dismissed or discounted. Comments might include statements like: “Why are you upset? You knew he was depressed!” “Aren’t you over it yet?” or “At least you still have other children.”

Blaming Survivors:

Relations can become very strained following a suicide when people blame each other – overtly or covertly. Blame can take the form of malicious gossip or directed comments such as “Well, maybe if you hadn’t ...” “You should have never ...” “That’s what you get for ...”

These are all ways of making survivors feel they do not have a right to their pain. It is a way of saying there is something wrong for letting the pain get control.

Because new survivors are already so raw with grief, they have little resilience. The pain, disappointment and anger which is generated at these times becomes entangled in the original pain and can live on for years.

The grief from suicide is often traumatic and complicated and for that reason alone, may take longer to process than other grief. Survivors suffer terribly and have a right to mourn in their own time and in their own way. The torturous pain will not last forever. Life will never be the same, but healing does and will occur.

<https://allianceofhope.org/the-survivor-experience/aspects-of-grief/secondary-wounds/>

The Lost and Found

Nothing can prepare a parent for being awakened in the middle of the night and opening the door to an officer – an old school friend in my case – who, with no preliminary chit-chat, announced, “I’m afraid I have bad news and I can’t make this any easier. Preston has died by suicide. The words hit me with such force I doubled over and stumbled backward, like I’d been kicked in the stomach. I couldn’t breathe. I clawed at my head, desperately trying to get what I’d heard out of my brain, so it couldn’t comprehend it. That was, bar none, the worst moment of my grief experience – of my life.

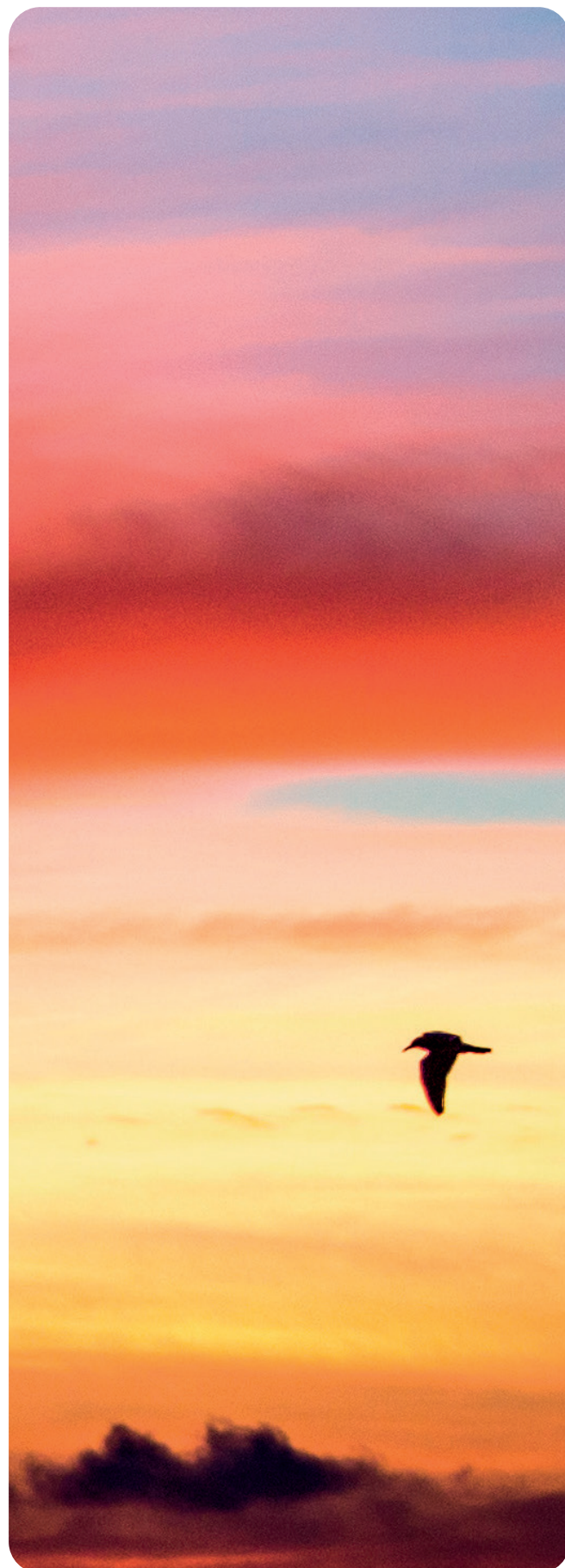
I had tried to help my son but didn’t understand depression; didn’t know what he was experiencing. I found out so much more after it was too late, and that guilt gnawed at me for a long time.

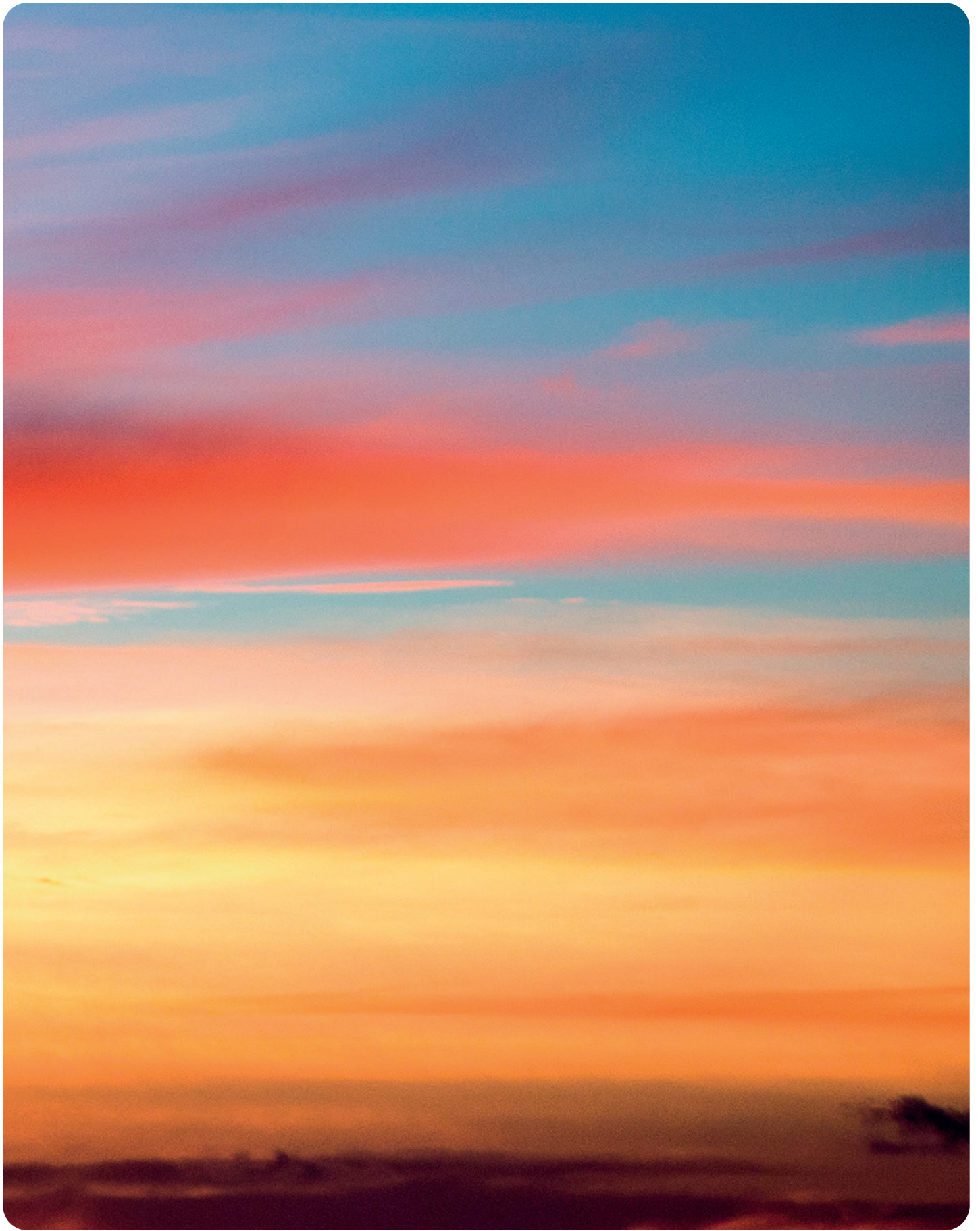
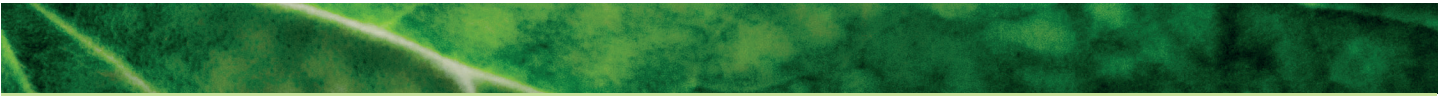
The emotions of losing someone you love so much are very powerful and intense. I’m not one to cry in front of others, but instinctively knew I had to get the feelings out, so I’d go for drives – usually at night – and scream and bawl and curse and scream some more. I had to have that release or I don’t know if I could have survived.

I don’t doubt that ‘death’ is a transformation of energy, so I felt his soul lived on, but he wasn’t here, and I missed him. I still do and will every minute of my life.

I wanted to get beyond just surviving, though. I wanted to keep Preston’s memory alive and honor him in some way. I felt he wanted me to be happy and decided that the best way would be to live my life the way he couldn’t. I believe our loved ones don’t want us to stay in grief and I knew other parents who couldn’t let go of their children who had passed many years before. I couldn’t live that way. My new goal was to remember him with joy and no negative emotions, which is easier said than done.

By Joni Greever





I am grateful for your life...
even as I mourn your death.

I laugh at the memories...
even as I cry for those not made.

I recognise the beauty in life...
even as I experience it's ugliness.

I embrace hope and joy...
even as my heart breaks.

I live... even as I grieve.

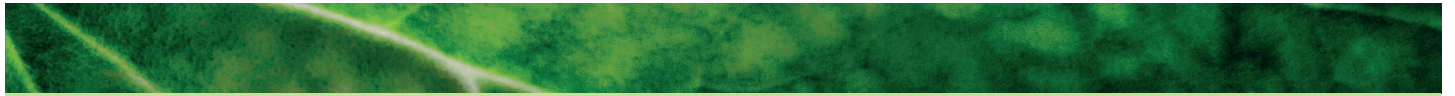
all-greatquotes.com

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

Holly Kohler

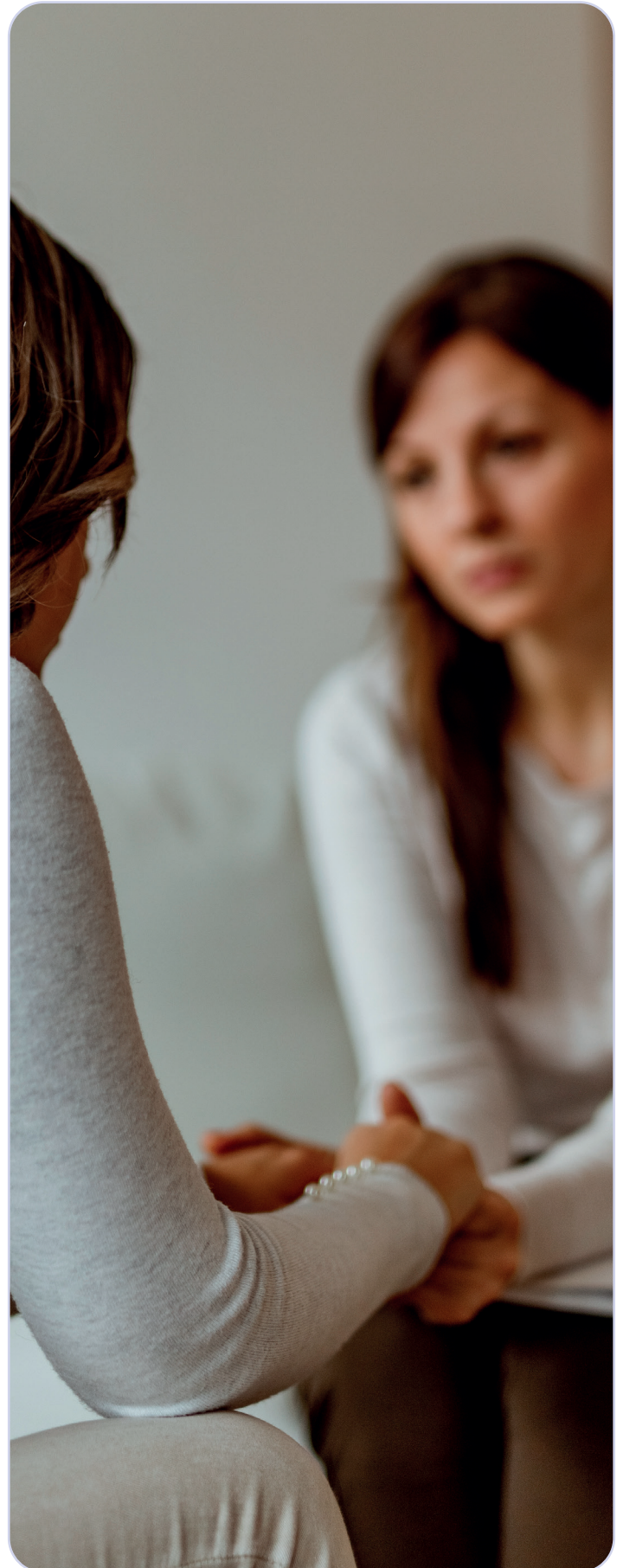
FOR
SOME
MOMENTS
IN
LIFE
THERE
ARE
NO
WORDS.

Anon



6 truths people living with depression can relate to:

1. There is nothing worse than feeling depressed when by all accounts things in your life are going well and you 'should' be happy.
2. You start thinking more and more negatively and while you often know what you are doing, you just can't stop.
3. You know what it's like to sleep for a full 8 (or more) hours and yet still feels like you could sleep for days.
4. There are days when all the money, chocolate, or love in the world couldn't make you get out of bed.
5. You know what it feels like to walk around with a smile on your face while on the inside you are barely holding it together.
6. There is nothing more isolating than opening up to someone about how you are feeling and hearing things like "it's just a phase", "you are just having a bad day" and the best of them all... "have you tried exercising?"



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 Ipsum Creative for their ongoing support with the newsletter and to Uniting Communities "Ucity" for providing the facilities to hold our support meetings.