

# SURVIVAL OVER SUICIDE



MAY 2006

**Offering sharing, understanding and healing for all those who have been touched by suicide.**

## Monthly Meetings

**Mooresville** 2nd Tuesday @ 7:00pm—Jacob Ammon Building 116 S Main St. Suite 104

**Statesville** 4th Tuesday @ 7:00pm 221 E Broad St Wachovia Bank upstairs meeting room

## SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEED MORE TIME

As a survivor of suicide, I reflect on how much my life has changed and developed since my mom's death. An adolescent when my mom completed suicide, I was ultimately shaped into becoming a resource and support for others who are challenged by depression, suicide, grief, and various kinds of losses.

As a counselor for others who are bereaved, I facilitate support groups for survivors of suicide. Over the years, I have found what is most helpful to them, and in the process, have learned much from them that helps me in my healing, too. Here is some of what I have found to be helpful to others on the journey of grief.

### GUILT TRIP

I encourage survivors to share what they find are the key differences in grieving a suicide and any other type of death. Most say it is the intensified shock, the guilt and anger in coping with the death of their special person.

I can identify with those feelings. Although I was only 17 when my mom died by suicide, I experienced extreme guilt in my grief, I believed that "if only" I had done something different, I could have save her. I eventually came to terms with the fact that there was noth-

ing I could have done to stop what had occurred. Like many survivors, I too, beat myself up with the "what ifs" for quite some time.

### THE MAD SQUAD

Not all survivors experience anger, but most do. This anger can be felt in various ways. For instance, it is commonly directed at the person who died. This particular anger lead them to reflect on the struggles their loved one endured, and soon, the survivor feels guilty all over again for being angry with the person who died. For others, their anger takes aim at other survivors. Placing blame for their loved one's death. No matter what form anger – or other strong emotions —take, it is important for a survivor to express these feelings in a safe and even therapeutic environment, either with friends who are trustworthy, or with a counselor.

### IT TAKES TIME

It is crucial to be aware of the accentuated duration and intensity of grief following a suicide. Most individuals take years to recover from the devastation of this event. It is estimated that someone grieving a sudden loss with take three times the average amount of time to heal from the death. Being sensitive to the amount

of time and the extreme emotions that survivor will feel while grieving is one way that you can assist in the healing process. Another way to help a survivor during this long journey is to allow him or her to tell and retell the specifics surrounding the death.

### THE WHOLE TRUTH

When informing loved ones about the death, honesty is best. Small lies only become larger lies. A survivor spared the truth to be protected will end up re-grieving the death of their loved one when the truth unfolds. This can occur even many years after the actual date of death. Remember to always disclose age-appropriate details, being mindful of the consequences of dishonesty You may want to consult with a professional counselor to help you know how much to tell others.

### REMEMBER

Commemorating and validating the life of a loved one is extremely beneficial in the healing process. Even seemingly simple gestures, like planting a tree or creating a memory box, can be quite empowering.

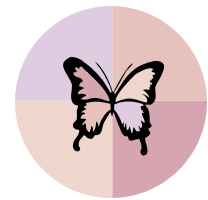
By: *Doreen Cammarata*



We welcome any suggestions or contributions you would like to see in these columns.

Please contact us anytime.  
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### A DAY

A laugh a day keeps the heart pumping.  
A tear a day keeps the mind clear.  
A smile a day gives joy to others.  
A hug a day gives the hopeless hope.  
A thought a day brings loved ones near.  
A memory a day brings you closer to me.  
Laughs, tears, smiles, hugs stitched with thoughts and memories—  
They're all in my days without you.

By: *Pam Burden*

## REMEMBRANCES

MICHEAL "ALEX" MASON  
05/06/1988 - 10/20/2005

LINDSEY CLAIRE BYERS  
04/14/1990 - 05/12/2005

GIUSEPPE "JOE" COSTA  
06/30/1968 - 05/31/2005