

# SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE



## King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2021  
NEWSLETTER

Website: [www.auburnsos.com](http://www.auburnsos.com)

e-mail: [support@auburnsos.com](mailto:support@auburnsos.com)

### **WHAT IS S.O.S.?**

S.O.S. stands for Survivors of Suicide. S.O.S. groups provide support for anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. Based on guidelines established by the American Association of Suicidology, the groups are self-help and peer-led. The goal is to help deal with the loss and trauma and grief associated with that loss. Auburn S.O.S. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization as defined by the IRS.

### **LOVE GIFTS:**

If you would like to remember your Loved One who has completed suicide in the form of a Love Gift it will be mentioned in the newsletter if we have your permission. There are no dues or fees at S.O.S. Donations are always welcome to help defray such costs as printing, postage, and the purchase of books and other material for our lending libraries and other costs associated with the community awareness programs we are involved in.

Donations may be mailed to the address below or made at any meeting. Please make your checks payable to Auburn or Olympia SOS.

Auburn Survivors of Suicide  
28824 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S.  
Federal Way, WA 98003

**Contact information for each group and its facilitator is on page three.**

*Many thanks to Lara Durand-Gorden for a donation this last month.*

*Many thanks to Jenni Binford for a donation in memory of her brother Zac Jenckes*

*Thanks to all of you who have helped over this last year – you are appreciated!*

*A very special thank you to Cheryl Nordgren for volunteering to prepare our newsletters for mailing!*

### **IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE:**

Please do not hesitate to pick up your phone and call another survivor from a S.O.S. group if you are having a hard time. We've all been there!

Felipa Galaviz	253-376-3198	Lost grandson	Kathy Melsness	253-446-6500	Lost daughter
Andee Nydegger	253-820-1911	Lost brother	Pam Driggers	253-921-7829	Lost husband
Janis Fesenmaier	360-866-2509	Lost brother	Kathy Sterling	206-244-8729	Lost grandson
José Martin	206-228-7413	Lost son			

Thinking of You Especially:

Nov 2	Suzanne Gray	Lost her husband Marshall
Nov 3	Kristin and Charlie Evans	Lost her son Scott Roberson
Nov 3	Rick and Ellen Nelson	Lost their son Erik
Nov 3	Jan Strickland	Lost her spouse Jacob
Nov 3	Amanda Woods	Lost her father Dean
Nov 8	Tiffany Heredia	Lost her mom Diane
Nov 8	Lori Storm	Lost her son Randy
Nov 11	Nancy Babst	Lost her son Garrett
Nov 11	Kristen Fisher	Lost her brother Garrett
Nov 11	Emily Wallace	Lost her friend Garrett
Nov 11	Jenine Ellisor	Lost her son James
Nov 11	Linda Page	Lost her daughter Stephanie
Nov 13	Jessica Tinius	Lost her husband Sean
Nov 16	Hayley Sterling	Lost her son Michael
Nov 16	Kieth and Kathy Sterling	Lost their grandson Michael
Nov 19	Deloris Brodt	Lost her daughter Toni
Nov 19	Sharon Baughman	Lost her daughter Rachel
Nov 20	Gretchen Price	Lost her spouse Jeff
Nov 23	Jeni Jones	Lost her boyfriend Derek
Nov 24	Eric and Kathy Swanson	Lost their son Anthony
Nov 24	Dru Gonia	Lost her daughter Kara
Nov 26	Leslie Phillips	Lost her son Robbie
Nov 28	Jon and Shannon Hennessy	Lost their son Baxter
Nov 28	Lydia and Larry Garrett	Lost their son Phil
Nov 29	Anna Johnson	Lost her son Jens
Nov 30	Lilli Blaylock	Lost her son Andy
Nov 30	Sandy Payne	Lost her son George
Nov	Aaron Hendrickson	Lost his nephew Xay
Dec 1	Britni Owens	Lost her mother Vikki
Dec 1	Elisa Jungbauer	Lost her brother Arthur
Dec 1	Jennifer Nelson	Lost her mother Linda
Dec 1	Ellen Boldhaupt	Lost their mother Edith
Dec 2	Angela Cunningham	Lost her partner Upin
Dec 2	Shawna Myers	Lost her son James
Dec 2	Doug & Cathy Johnson	Lost their son James
Dec 4	Andi Church	Lost her son Travis
Dec 5	Stephanie DeVault	Lost her daughter Vanessa
Dec 7	Rosemary Schilz	Lost her nephew Joshua
Dec 7	Kelly Paulsen	Lost her spouse Jim
Dec 7	Glenda Binford	Lost her father Larry
Dec 7	Betty Hamilton	Lost her husband Larry
Dec 10	Helen Jordan	Lost her spouse David
Dec 10	David Jordan	Lost his father David
Dec 10	Denise and Jim Tiller	Lost their son Matthew
Dec 10	Jaelyn Ehli	Lost her brother Matthew
Dec 13	John Thomason	Lost his son John Matthew
Dec 15	Jan Lumsden	Lost her brother
Dec 15	Lynn Nieland	Lost her former spouse Brian
Dec 16	Emily Gould	Lost her friend Sean
Dec 16	Jan Lumsden	Lost her mother
Dec 19	Monica Gockel	Lost her dad Tim
Dec 21	Shelia Anderson	Lost her daughter April
Dec 22	Marjorie Silver	Lost her dad Mac
Dec 23	Kim Dickson	Lost her husband John
Dec 24	Stacy Mayer	Lost his brother Scott
Dec 28	Cliff Whipple	Lost his son Lance
Dec 28	Tiffany Christie	Lost her dad Thomas
Dec 30	Karen Nash	Lost her son Bobby
Dec 31	Gary Keizer	Lost his daughter Rachel
Dec 31	Liz Carr	Lost her brother Michael

*We also remember our loved ones whose birthdays are in the following months:*

**November birthdays: Diane, Robin, Dean, Marnie, Liberty, Sandi, Marcus, Ed, Craig, John, Mac, Randy, Tom, Mark, Edith, Garth, John, Samuel, Caleb, Akira, Austin Kyle, Stephen Lee, Aaron, Steve, Kevin, Robby, Danielle, Bill, Ken, Jeff, Kolby, Alex and Anthony.**

**December birthdays: Kory, Terry, Victrina, Travis, Michael Shane, Rick, Robert, Paul, Noel, Bobby, Kevin, John, Cameron, Brian, Brad, Randy, Scott, Robbie, Rich, Debbie, Jack, Thomas, Paul, Christopher, Jens, Chris, Jennifer, Derek, Jon, Berry, James and Devin.**

We strive for accuracy. If we are missing the name of your loved one or if the information is incorrect please let us know so we can correct it! Send an e-mail to [newsletter@auburnsos.com](mailto:newsletter@auburnsos.com)

**MEETINGS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER - please note the changes!**

***Zoom Meetings! –***

Until the pandemic and the lockdowns are over we all need to stay safe! Since we cannot meet in person we will be hosting Zoom meetings at the regular meetings times:

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 6 pm for the Tacoma Group

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7 pm for the Olympia Group and

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 7 pm for the Auburn Group

Go to our Facebook page to find the meeting, the **password is ‘Auburn’**.

Don’t have Zoom? Download it for free at Zoom.com. The link to the meeting is on our Facebook page – or ask and we can email it to you if you aren’t on Facebook. Please join us!

**When things are back to ‘normal’ – this is when and where we meet:**

The **Auburn** Group meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held at the Auburn Fire Station located at 1101 D Street in Auburn from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

If you have any questions or need directions please call Pam at 253-921-7829.

The **Olympia** Group meets on the third Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held at the Westwood Baptist Church in room E-10, located at 333 Kaiser Road in Olympia from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

For more information or directions please call Janis at 360-866-2509.

The **Tacoma** Group meets on the second Wednesday of every month. Meetings are held at the TACID Building, Room 2, the address is 6315 S. 19<sup>th</sup>, Tacoma 98466, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

For more information or directions please call Colette at 360-490-3454 or [coletteaugust@gmail.com](mailto:coletteaugust@gmail.com).

There is no fee to attend any of these groups. For more information send an e-mail to [support@auburnsos.com](mailto:support@auburnsos.com)



**We hope to start meeting in person again as soon as allowed. It will be posted on our website and our Facebook page when it happens**



I ask you to try to Understand That time or season Does not change the pain	I want to smile and laugh To enjoy the holiday cheer But sometimes I just need The space to shed some tears
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# No Thanks(giving)



My parents and I aren't in a Thanksgiving mood after my brother's sudden death. Other relatives disagree. How can we ditch the holiday in style?

By [Meg Tansey](#)

I'm feeling the opposite of thankful. I can't remember a Thanksgiving I've celebrated without my younger brother. This year, I'll have no choice, because he suddenly died. Unless, of course, we don't celebrate at all. My immediate family discussed taking a break from the holiday this year. But our extended family and friends say it's important to be around people, it's what he would have wanted, we should find small pockets of gratitude in the holiday, blah blah blah. I'm not convinced. What to do?

How I love Thanksgiving, with its cranberry sauce and parade and people telling you what you should be grateful for. Oh, wait – as it turns out, I only love two of those things. I don't blame you at all for not feeling grateful when your little brother is gone. Moreover, we all know that no one can make you feel what you don't feel, so your well-meaning relatives are, well, wrong. Especially if your immediate family is united on this subject, by all means skip Thanksgiving.

Listen, you're going to miss your brother no matter what you end up doing. I see zero wrong with making the decision not to celebrate a holiday that you don't feel up to celebrating. But, skipping something that scores of people around you are NOT skipping takes some planning.

- If you can't collectively fly the coop for an entirely different destination, can you, less dramatically, drive away from the coop for a somewhat different destination? Cities, in particular, even when fully decked for the holidays also have tons of people not celebrating, or working, or just getting on with their lives in a way that I have always found comforting.
- No pain has ever been lessened by eating gas station burritos because everything else around you is closed. Check out what's open, with a strong preference for things that won't feature turkey on the menu, or places that will deliver. And make sure to stock up on food. Even if you're not celebrating, you won't get a pass from end-of-civilization-style lines at the grocery store on Wednesday.
- Lean in to the fact that you're skipping Thanksgiving. That is, don't just eat cereal and watch the parade in your pajamas. Figure out a way to get out into nature, whether it's a hike or a long drive or a picnic on a deserted beach. Then watch a movie. (Look, the day's almost over).

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Full disclosure: I have taken Thanksgiving off. Once upon a time, not freshly grieving, but feeling overwhelmed, I made the decision to skip what had been, until then, my hands-down favorite holiday of the year. I was worried I would regret this decision terribly, until I spent Thanksgiving morning hiking in a rainforest and Thanksgiving afternoon drinking frozen drinks by a pool and Thanksgiving evening eating steak. I'm not overstating the case when I say it was one of the best decisions I've made in the last five years. Now, every year around this time a little part of me thinks: you can keep your pilgrim stories and leaves crunching underfoot, if you need me, I'll be by the pool.

Once Thanksgiving is over, you will, unfortunately, have no shortage of other special occasions to figure out how to navigate without your brother. But, chances are, somewhere down the line, you will also have holidays where you feel genuinely grateful and his memory will bring you joy. Why not just let them come in their own time?

Meg Tansey hails from New England, where talking about your feelings is frowned upon. She has lots of life experience but is not an actual therapist. Meg has a MFA from The New School and currently lives and writes in New York City. Send Meg your questions at [hello@modernloss.com](mailto:hello@modernloss.com) (subject: Ask ML).

## ***Getting Through the Holidays: Advice From the Bereaved***

The signs of the holiday season are ubiquitous: holiday decorations in the stores, piped in Christmas carols, holiday displays at the malls, TV programs focusing on selecting the perfect gift, holiday parties and gift exchanges at work. In many cases, this bustle of activity contrasts markedly with the emptiness and despair of grief. As one grieving person expressed it, “I wanted to crawl into a hole and come out after the holidays had passed.” Drawing primarily from my conversations with the bereaved, I describe commonly experienced difficulties and ideas that may be useful in dealing with them.

### **Dilemmas Associated with the Holiday Season**

1. **The Requirement of Cheerfulness.** There is an expectation during the holidays that people should be cheerful. One mourner explained that she hated going to holiday gatherings. “I could not be cheerful and I did not want to bring other people down by being sad. Going to such gatherings is like having to eat liver and pretending you like it,” she said.
2. **The Mine Field of Social Exchanges.** On many occasions, the innocent remarks of others may put a knife through the mourner’s heart. Shortly after the death of their son, the parents attended a holiday dinner hosted by the boy’s grandparents. The host began the meal with a blessing, “Thank you for bringing the whole family together.” The father was so distressed by this remark that he left the table. “Then I felt even worse,” he said, “because I had disrupted the gathering for everyone else.” Mourners can be thrown off guard by the remarks of complete strangers—for example, being admonished by a store clerk, “I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday.” As one bereaved husband indicated, “You think of many responses, but you keep them to yourself.”
3. **The Complexity of Decisions.** Bereaved individuals must navigate a difficult path in deciding how to handle decisions about family activities and rituals. As one mourner indicated, “I was not sure whether I should hang my son’s stocking or not. I decided to hang it, because after all he is my son. But my husband thought that this was not a good idea. He told me that I was ‘in denial.’”
4. **The Ambush.** During the holidays, mourners are often hit by powerful feelings that are evoked by some reminder of the loss. Consequently, they experience what Noel and Blair (2000) have called “the ambush.” As one mother explained, “I was taking out the Christmas ornaments and I came across an ornament that Timmy had made in kindergarten. It had his hand print on it. I dissolved into tears.” These events, which are unexpected and unpredictable, are also called “blindside reminders,” “zingers,” and “grief attacks.” Although natural and normal, such experiences are often frightening in their intensity. They literally can take the mourner’s breath away and bring about heart palpitations and other symptoms.



### **Mourner’s Suggestions for Things to Try**

1. **Plan Ahead.** Don’t allow the holidays to just happen. Also, try to use a Plan A/Plan B approach to the holidays. Plan A might involve spending Christmas or Hanukkah with relatives; Plan B might mean having a simple dinner and watching a movie at home. Having a Plan B can be comforting even if you don’t use it.
2. **Arrange a Family Meeting** or a conference call to discuss how you would like to spend the holiday season. Let everyone in your family have a say, even the children.
3. **Consider Changing Your Routine.** If you always prepared the family meal, you may want to consider having dinner with relatives or friends. Or you may want to leave town altogether, heading for a cabin in the woods or an excursion to the mountains or the shore.
4. **Take Charge of Your Social Life.** Although you may not feel like getting together with anyone, consider accepting a few invitations to be with close family or friends. Choose to be around people who make you feel comfortable and safe. Avoid social events that seem more like obligation.
5. **Scale Back.** Because grief robs us of our emotional and physical energy, consider cutting back on such holiday tasks as sending cards, baking, decorating, or putting up a tree. Some of these activities may be painful to execute in light of the loss. One woman who lost a child stated that, “It broke my heart to write three names on the holiday cards instead of four, so I stopped sending cards.” Let others know that you may not be able to do things that you have done in the past.
6. **Be Gentle With Yourself.** Accept that feelings of anguish are difficult to avoid during the holiday season. Do not expect too much of yourself, and recognize that you are doing the best you can.

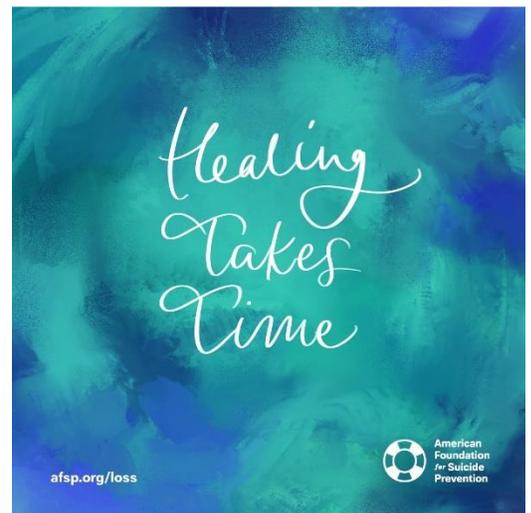
7. **Have an Exit Strategy.** In many cases, it is difficult for mourners to be around a lot of people. If they do go to a social gathering, they may not want to stay very long. This problem can be dealt with by developing an exit strategy in advance. For example, a widower may tell the hostess that, "I may need to leave early because I get tired easily"
8. **Honor Your Loved One's Memory.** Some people have maintained that coming up with ways to do this can bring a positive focus to our grief. There are many ways to remember the person who died: share your favorite stories about him; light a candle in remembrance; make a donation in her name. You might also consider making a list of positive qualities that your loved one brought into the world. Another idea is to spend time working on a goal or value that was important to the deceased. If your father was very involved in conservation efforts, for example, you might volunteer your time to a group working towards conservation, or consider making a donation to this cause.
9. **Find People Who Will Provide Support.** When people are already experiencing the great stress of grief, the additional strains of the holiday season can create distress that is almost unbearable. Thus it is important to identify those relatives and friends whom you feel are good listeners, and share your feelings with them. It may also help to recruit support for specific tasks that are particularly difficult. For example, a bereaved father found it heart-wrenching to go Christmas shopping alone because it upset him to encounter presents his daughter would have enjoyed. He asked a neighbor to accompany him to the mall so that he could purchase presents for his surviving children. "John helped me to focus so that I could get the job done," he said.
10. **Consider Attending a Support Group.** At this time of year, it can be particularly useful to interact with people who have experienced a loss that is similar to yours. Such individuals are likely to understand exactly what you are going through. In many cases, members will also be able to share strategies for dealing with the challenges of the holidays. As Rosof (1994) has indicated, those who have experienced a similar loss can also help us to understand that our feelings and fears are normal under the circumstances.

Because of the difficulties inherent at this time of year, it is easy for mourners to feel that they are making little headway in dealing with their loss. Noel and Blair (2000) have suggested that mourners may be moving forward even when they are unaware of it. According to these authors, "Wherever you are in the grief process... We know it's hard—and we also know it gets less hard. The next time a special occasion, anniversary or holiday comes around you will feel a little more in control, a little less pained, the situation will be a little less difficult and you will begin to celebrate life again—one day".

## International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is an event in which survivors of suicide loss come together to find connection, understanding, and hope through their shared experience. This year, International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is Saturday, November 20, 2021. [You can find a current list of registrations at www.afsp.org.](http://www.afsp.org) If you cannot find an event in your area, please check back with your local afsp chapter.. Local events may be added until October 1. If you have questions please contact your [local AFSP chapter](#) or email [survivorday@afsp.org](mailto:survivorday@afsp.org).

In 1999, Senator Harry Reid, who lost his father to suicide, introduced a resolution to the United States Senate, leading to the creation of International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. Also known as Survivor Day, the day was designated by the United States Congress as a day on which those affected by suicide can join together for healing and support. It was determined that Survivor Day would always fall on the Saturday before American Thanksgiving, as the holidays are often a difficult time for suicide loss survivors.



**There may be events happening locally, if so we will post them on our website and on Facebook**

*Bereaved Holiday Season Survival Guide*

*By Tanya Lord*

It is okay to change everything  
It is okay to change nothing

*Breathe*

It is okay to say "no"  
It is okay to say "yes"

*Breathe*

It is okay to celebrate  
It is okay to hide

*Breathe*

It is okay to remember  
It is okay to honor

*Breathe*

It is okay to hurt  
It is okay to laugh

*Breathe*

It will be okay

*Just Breathe*

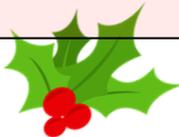


*There are no rules for surviving holiday grief. Do what you need to do to survive.*

*Honor your loved one how you need to, and do what feels best for your fragile, aching heart.*

*You are missing a huge piece of you, so do whatever you need to do to find a sliver of peace.*

Angela Miller



*Donations are always appreciated and are tax deductible*



**YOUR DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED, APPRECIATED AND ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.**

Please mail your donations to:

28824 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S., Federal Way, WA. 98003

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

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Federal Way, WA 98003

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<p>This holiday season There is one thing I ask Could you maybe help me Do this one little task?</p> <p>Please share the memories Even those that bring tears Thinking you have forgotten Is one of my biggest fears</p>	<p>It might seem awkward And easier to ignore Pretend nothing is different That things are like before</p> <p>This year let's celebrate The love that still lives on Let's talk and remember Those who left, but are not gone Tanya Lord</p>
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