



SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE

King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2020

NEWSLETTER



Website: www.auburnsos.com

e-mail: 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 21st Ave. S.
Federal Way, WA 98003

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

Feeling Stressed? These are incredibly stressful times. On top of having lost a loved one to suicide we are in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic, wondering it will ever end and how does one celebrate the holidays while staying safe? Suicide survivors are also prone to having a high suicide rate. Please, do whatever you can to take care of yourselves. We have support meetings three times a month on zoom and a group within Facebook where you can chat with other survivors. There are numerous groups online and a multitude of phone numbers. If you're needing help and don't know where to turn there is a list on our website and phone numbers on the bottom of this page of people willing to listen. Please stay safe!

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	Kathy Crowley	253-471-9412	Lost son

Thinking of You Especially:

Nov 2	Suzanne Gray	Lost her husband Marshall
Nov 3	Kristin and Charlie Evans	Lost her son Scott
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, Kristen Fisher	Lost her son Garrett, 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 13	Michelle Nelson	Lost her brother Shon
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 Gonias	Lost her daughter Kara
Nov 26	Leslie Phillips	Lost her son Robbie
Nov 27	Joan Helbacka	Lost her brother Bill
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	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	Rachel Kringle	Lost her dad Greg
Dec 10	Denise and Jim Tiller, Jaclyn Ehli	Lost their son Matthew, 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 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



Hugs to all of our fellow survivors out there during this challenging time. Take care of yourselves and those close to you – and be safe!



We all miss being able to meet together, the sharing after the meetings ~ the hugs! We will meet together again as soon as it is safe and we are allowed to do so. Until then we will keep on having three zoom meetings every month. We encourage you to try one – you may find you actually like it! Remember, SOS are there for you!

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:

2nd Wednesday at 6 pm

3rd Tuesday at 7 pm and

4th Tuesday at 7 pm

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

Don't have Zoom? Download it for free at Zoom.com. If you are not familiar with Zoom, it is a way to meet with many people on the computer (or phone). 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. 19th, 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.

There is no fee to attend any of these groups. For more information send an e-mail to support@auburnsos.com

Handling the Holidays After Loss

By Jess Keefe

Losing a friend or family member to addiction is like a layer cake of pain. There's the usual grief experience as the base, of course—but then on top, there's layer after layer of complicated feelings about the exact way in which your loved one died. There's the shock and the self-blame. The anger and frustration. The shame and the fear of judgment.

Sounds delicious, right?

This layer cake is particularly unappetizing during the holiday season, when all you really want is to chow down on some figgy pudding like everybody else. During the holidays, it can feel like you're surrounded by perfect, happy families drinking cocoa and playing touch football and making snow angels. And when you're hurting, all that in-your-face cheer is enough to turn anybody into a Grinch.

I lost my little brother to an overdose in 2015. In the years since, I've learned that losing a loved one never stops hurting. The feelings change and evolve, but the pain is always there. No matter how long it's been since your loss, there's no doubt that the holiday season is especially hard. But there are ways to get through it—and even enjoy parts of it. Just remember a few key things.

It's okay to not be okay.

During this season of mass merriment, grief can be especially disorienting. “Why don't I feel all merry and bright?” you may find yourself wondering. “Why don't I want to celebrate and spread good cheer? What are all these people so *happy about*, anyway?”

Be nice to yourself when you feel this way. Remember that it's okay to not feel particularly festive. It's okay to be sad, angry, or even resentful. Be aware of how you feel, and remember that it won't last forever. Take the time you need to sit with those unpleasant thoughts and then move through them, rather than letting them suck you down. By respecting these not-so-great feelings, rather than attempting to silence or ignore them, you'll also prevent yourself from lashing out or saying things you may regret later.

If you're struggling, let people know.

Don't choke down bad feelings like so many chunks of overcooked turkey. Don't try to power through your sadness for the sake of the family gift swap. You may think you're sparing people drama, but in reality, you'll feel worse in the long run.

I understand the impulse to just grin and bear it. No one wants to be a downer, especially around the holidays. But remember: Your feelings matter, and they're important to your loved ones. No one would want you to suffer in silence. So if you're having a hard time, raise your hand. Reach out to people you love and trust. Tell them how you're feeling, and you may be surprised by the love and support you receive in return.

Make a plan in advance for moments when you may feel overwhelmed.

The reality is, it'll all probably hit you at some point. Even if you think you're fine, and over it, and feeling great—be prepared for some unexpected Emotions with a capital E.

Maybe you'll sit down at the dinner table and be reminded of how your mom always folded the napkins into little birds every year, and now she's not here to. Maybe you'll think of how your best friend always used to be grossed out by the cranberry sauce. If there's one thing I've learned about grief, it's that little memories like that have the power to fly into your head and overwhelm you in an instant.

So it's best to be prepared. Put a plan in place ahead of time that will help you later, in moments when everything starts to feel like too much. Think about what you'll say to excuse yourself, and where you'll go to

calm down. If you'll want someone to come with you, give them a heads up, too. Think of it as your emotional game plan. And the pros always stick to the game plan.

If you want to talk about your loved one, you can and should.

People are awkward about death. If the people around you at family holiday gatherings aren't talking about your loved one or your loss, it's probably not because they're being callous. It's probably just because they feel awkward about it, and they don't want to upset you or others.

But if you want to talk about the person you've lost, you can and should (just try to focus on the happy memories, in order to avoid upsetting others or even triggering a fight.) Share a memory from childhood holidays. Talk about their laugh, their smile, their favorite ugly Doc Martens. Once you set the tone and let everyone know that it's okay to reminisce and share, others will follow your lead.

In order to feel better, accept that you feel bad.

For many of us, the hard truth is that this season just plain sucks. But it does get easier, once you learn how to cope with it. And it can even start to feel like a joyful occasion again, if you try to include the person you miss so much in everyone's hearts and minds.

**The holidays may be even more challenging this year – how do you share the joy via zoom?
With experts advising against meeting during the holidays some of the above suggestions may not apply.
There is always next year! And six feet away!**



**The First Chanukah
By Nan Katz**

I remember my first Chanukah after our daughter Vickie died. It came about three weeks after her death. One afternoon when I felt strong I went to a department store. I remember thinking I would buy a gift for everyone in my family while I was there and that would have to do. I wouldn't be able to handle anything else this year.

I believe now, even though I didn't think about it at the time, that I was giving myself the freedom to do only what I was able – that it was not necessary for me to come up with the well thought out gifts, dinner, and fuss that I had enjoyed in the past.

I think that 'freedom' is a word that may apply in a number of ways to those of us who are grieving. What about the freedom to grieve in our own ways without the 'you should's' that are sometimes offered by well-meaning friends and family?

What about the freedom to let go of our guilt and anger without feeling guilty? Or the freedom to admit to ourselves that we are healing, despite our protestations that we never would?

Try to give yourself a Chanukah gift this year: the gift of Freedom and the candle shine of Memory.

***"It is not the strength of the body that counts,
but the strength of the spirit."***

–J.R.R. Tolkien

How to Survive Thanksgiving Day Grief

By Chris Raymond

Thanksgiving Day can feel particularly cruel to those mourning the death of a loved one. Not only can the bereaved find it difficult to feel appreciative during this annual time of giving thanks, but the traditions, rituals, and gatherings we often associate with the holiday also tend to emphasize the fact that a beloved family member or friend is not present and compound our feelings of loss. This article offers five tips to help you cope with the Thanksgiving Day holiday if you're grieving the death of a loved one.

- You need to determine how much responsibility you feel comfortable taking on right now and then clearly communicate that to your family members and friends
- Give yourself a pass this Thanksgiving by accepting things as they are, even if they fall short of the Norman Rockwell image in your head.
- Empower yourself by incorporating his or her memory into your Thanksgiving plans
- Consider establishing a new tradition — just for this year — that fits with your energy and mood.
- However you decide to celebrate Thanksgiving Day this year, you should determine and know your limits ahead of time.

The Gift

By Rose Thompson

What can you do for me, you say?
You can bring me a gift, a gift today.

Say my son's name, say it loud and clear,
Help others to remember that he once was here.

Speak of his antics, his joys, his pains,
Talk as if he were here again.

Remind me of the laughter he brought to you,
Sit down and tell a story or two.

I'll let you do the talking 'cause it's ever so rare,
That you would bring him up – some won't even dare.

What gift could you give, what words can you say,
That would make my heart lighter as I face the day?

The song of his words, the music of his name,
How wonderful it would be just to hear it again.



Spirit of Love,

As we set the table of gratitude this day,
we set one less place this year.
As we hold hands in thanksgiving,
we know one set of hands is missing.
As we laugh and smile on the outside,
there is a sadness on the inside.

In the midst of this great loss,
we are reminded of the great love that is still
present,
for death does not take away the love we share.
We see our loved one in the table we set,
in the food we eat made from recipes they passed
down to us, and in the stories we tell.

So we come to this Thanksgiving Day in gratitude.
Gratitude for the time we did have together;
gratitude for the lessons our loved one taught us
which we carry on each day;
and gratitude for the ability to love so deeply, even
if it comes with loss so profound.

We come to this day in thanks:
Thanks for you who loved each one of us,
who helped guide us through life,
and who challenged us, and cared for us.
You will always have a place at this table.

May we celebrate this day as you would have
wanted us to-
with thanksgiving, joy, remembrance, and love.

Rev. Katie Norris

“Confront the dark parts of yourself, and work to banish them with illumination and forgiveness.
Your willingness to wrestle with your demons will cause your angels to sing.”

– August Wilson

Donations are always appreciated and are tax deductible



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

Please mail your donations to:

28824 21st Ave. S., Federal Way, WA. 98003

In memory of: _____

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Auburn SOS
28824 21st Ave. S.
Federal Way, WA 98003

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I Will Light Candles This Christmas

Candles of joy despite all sadness,
Candles of hope when despair keep watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest tossed days,
Candles of graces to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all the year long.

