



www.survivorsofsuicide.co.za

DURBAN NORTH joy@crisisteam.co.za
Joy Chiang 083 256 5993 :SueFairall 074 182 4360 Meetings are held the first Monday of every month from 18H30-20H30 at Pam Golding House, 2 Swapo Road Dbn North.

GLENWOOD
suicideprevent@gmail.com
Lori Barausse 083 652 0117
Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of every month from 18H00 171 Bulwer Road Glenwood

SADAG SUICIDE HELPLINE

0800567567

DIARY DATES : DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY GROUP MEETING: LAST TUES OF EVERY MONTH SMS Robin for details 0824991344

No one is obliged to speak and everything said is confidential.

MAY 2016 NEWSLETTER

Mother's Day - a difficult time for mothers and children who have lost loved ones to suicide.

I found three articles that can benefit and give hope to those who are still in the very beginning or middle of their devastating grieving journey.

I know Mother's Day was yesterday but hopefully these articles will give you sustenance and help sustain you in the days/months ahead when other important anniversaries /celebrations approach.

(Mother and Child- Pablo Picasso)

Lori



Grieving the Loss of a Mom on Mother's Day

We can explore the depths of the oceans and the outer reaches of space, but we, as a society, still don't deal well with death and loss.

Sometimes, the flubs are obvious — a 9-year-old told by her teacher that she couldn't make a Mother's Day card because her mother was dead, said Donna Schuurman. Schuurman is executive director of The Dougy Center, a nonprofit grief support center for children and their families who have experienced a death.

But other times, we may fumble by omission — like ignoring a struggling friend who is grieving the loss of a mother — just as Mother's Day is coming.

For many kids and adults who have lost a parent, Mother's Day can bring a sense of isolation as they cope privately with their grief while others happily celebrate with Mother's Day brunch specials and flower deliveries.

"We'll send cards (after a death) and say nice things like 'I'm sorry to hear about your mother,'" Schuurman said. "But very few people go beyond that and ask 'Tell me about her. What was your relationship like?'... What (grieving) people need is to find opportunities to be understood and to express what they're going through."

So how do you help yourself or a loved one to cope? Schuurman offered some advice not just on

what to do, but how to think about grief for Mother's Day or any holiday that magnifies the loss of what was — or could have been. Even those who did not have picture-perfect family memories often believe they could have repaired relations if they just had more time, she said.

- Be patient. Grief is not something that people just need to “get past,” she said. “We don't want to forget the person who died,” she said. “And we're in a society that says you need to move on, you need to put this behind you.” Don't make the mistake of believing the cliché that time heals all wounds. “What heals wounds is attending to them,” she said.

- Listen. People get hung up on what they should say, Schuurman said. That's not the point. The grieving person needs someone to listen. “We don't know how to just sit with someone and let them cry or let them reminisce.” For those who are grieving, she says, seek out those who want to hear your story.

- Buy a Mother's Day card. Write the sentiments and message that you want to say to your loved on. “Death doesn't end the relationship. It ends the ability to talk in the physical presence.” Schuurman recalled writing a letter to her father after he had died about a decade ago. She

just put her father's name on it with no address or return address and dropped it in the mailbox without a stamp. “I just put it out into the universe, because I needed to say it,” she said.

- Mother yourself. Take some time to reminisce, get a massage, take a walk or take care of yourself in a way that your mother would have — or you wish she would have.

- Create other rituals. If your loved one is buried at a cemetery, make Mother's Day a day for a visit. Think about what your mother loved, and create an outing connected to that. It could be as simple as taking the kids for an ice cream sundae to celebrate their mom's love of ice cream.

- Let yourself feel what you feel. Recognize that feelings of envy or sadness are normal when you see others celebrating. Connected with that, she suggests that parents should not hide their grief from their kids. You can explain to them why you're sad, and integrate these kinds of discussions through their lifetimes.

- Send a sympathy card. Again. Reach out to a grieving friend by letting them know that you are thinking of them and that Mother's Day may be a bittersweet day for them.

The Journey: When Your Knees Hit the Floor

by Kelley Clink



Since writing [A Different Kind of Same](#) about losing my brother to suicide, I've had the privilege of talking to a couple of book clubs. Yesterday I did a Q&A with one over the internet. It was a great group of women who were friendly and engaged. They had prepared insightful questions and made me feel welcome, even though I was kind of awkward and super nervous. I can't shake the belief that I'm rubbish in person. I think a lot of writers feel this way. Like, I'm happy to respond to any questions you have, just give me six months to write 15 drafts of my answer. But overall (I think) I managed to sound coherent. Until one woman asked, “How do you deal with the feelings of guilt and helplessness?”

That shut me right up.

You see, this club lost one of their members to suicide last year. They were right there in it, in the messiest, stickiest part of grief.

I floundered. There was a lot of “Ummmm,” and “Wow, that's a good question,” and a few ramblings about grief as evidence of deep love. I finally said I needed more time to think about it, and asked if I could email them my response. “I want to give you guys a really good answer,” I said.

The problem was that I already knew the answer, and I was worried that it was crappy. Nearly 12 years out from my own loss, I still want to believe there's something we can do to escape all that pain. There should be a handbook, a manual, or at least a list of helpful suggestions. I know there are a few things we can try: We can read books about grieving; we can talk to our friends and family about what we're feeling; we can pray, or meditate, or go for walks in quiet places; we can volunteer with suicide prevention efforts. These are all things I did, and they helped, some. But the truth is that the only way to deal with guilt and helplessness is to feel them, to let them soften us, to let them be part of our grief, and to be as gentle with ourselves as possible.

It's awful. It's really, really uncomfortable. It hurts. It takes a long time. And it isn't fair.

All last night I pouted and grumbled about it. I didn't want to be the bearer of this bad news. I wanted to be the hero, the sage, the one who knows where all the land mines are buried in the field of grief and, most important, how to dig them up safely. Then I remembered a quote that one of the other women shared at the end of our meeting, from the author Marianne Williamson.

"Something very beautiful happens to people when their world has fallen apart: a humility, a nobility, a higher intelligence emerges at just the point when our knees hit the floor."

And I realized, "Who am I to stop anyone's knees from hitting the floor?" The intent — to decrease someone's suffering — is pure, but the action robs survivors of the validation their grief needs. The

most powerful, most helpful thing I know to do is to tell the truth, even when it isn't what I want it to be. I also remembered that when you stop trying to chase away the guilt and the hopelessness, they have room to become kindness and compassion. When you give them space, they can lead you to empathy and love.

Your knees are going to hurt like hell. You're going to think you might never stand up again. But you will.

I hope this answers her question.

Kelley Clink's brother died by suicide in 2004. She is a suicide prevention and mental health advocate. You can learn more at her [website](#).

A Silent Declaration

by Anonymous



I made a silent declaration last night. ... And the more I think about it today the more sound, true and empowering it seems.

I REFUSE to take responsibility for anyone's grief but MINE!

In the early vicious days of my grief there was little or no control with how the grief emerged -- and I know some people were shocked. So I made myself hide MY grief and

limited myself to expressions of grief that were acceptable to whomever was around me at the time. I told myself that in "hiding" MY grief I was being private and not spreading my misery around. That is only a partial truth as I was still doing MY grieving MY way in secret. There is a world of difference between secret and private.

Of course my secret grieving sometimes broke through and at those times I found myself feeling that I had to defend actions to others who did not approve of my grieving method. That made me feel like **** on top of missing and loving my son. It became imperative that I grieve in a manner that was acceptable because my fear was that if I didn't, then the "Men in white coats" would be sent for me. Absolute internal panic.

I know that I am the "MOM" and as such I am to be the fixer of all, but this cannot be fixed and I am really broken. So as of today I reject any and all expectations and judgments about my grieving expressions, loud or silent. There is no need to censor. I have done nothing dangerous, alarming, startling, yes -- but not dangerous.

Let me do this and stop telling me how "wrong" I am being. I mean, really, how do you know? This is my heart and he is my son. Please may you never have to live the nightmare I am living now. From now on I am not "hiding" my grief. No more hiding my readings -- or the favorite foods of his I still make just so I can smell them. No more not talking about him, wondering about him and always loving and missing him.

This is my grief and that is the only grief I am going to take

responsibility for. I REFUSE to take responsibility for anyone's grief but MINE!

Okay so two of the above paragraphs do not apply to the members of this forum and I mean no disrespect in putting it out there. I could edit it greatly, but instead I offer the below statement. What I guess what I mean to say in a more PC manor, would be this:

'Dear Friends and Family, I am a Bereaved Mother and as such I hereby declare that I will no longer accept quietly any criticizing or judgement of my grieving style or duration without comment. I recognize that we are all grieving a wonderful loving young man. But please do not try to impose your ideas, thoughts or beliefs on my grieving.

I REFUSE to take responsibility for anyone's grief but MINE!

Love + Hope = Peace

*This essay originally appeared on the **Alliance of Hope Forum** and was reprinted with the permission of the author.*