



Telephone Help Line: 1300 767 022

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 Email: secretary@sosbsa.org.au
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 Mail: P.O. Box 334
 Springwood Qld 4127

What is Peer Support?

A group of people with similar experiences who come together to support and encourage each other.

SOSBSA runs facilitated support groups both fortnightly and monthly, depending on location. They are run **exclusively for those people who have lost a loved one to suicide**.

Support groups are free of charge, no membership is required, you can “drop in” whenever you choose without notice, and discussions are open and confidential. The facilitators lead the group and no-one is required to speak if they are not ready.

Why Peer Support?

The experience of grief due to suicide is unique and can, at times, be difficult for others without personal experience to understand.

A peer support group **brings together** those people who have first hand experience with suicide loss, so that they may share their feelings and stories with people who understand what they are going through.

Some people find it beneficial to get together in a support group to share their stories with other people who have been bereaved by suicide. This can be **therapeutic** and can be an invaluable source of **support, friendship, and information**.

It can be a way to **start the healing process** by learning new coping skills for getting through the difficult days. Being around people who understand what you are going through can help to give you permission to **grieve in your own way** and at your own pace without guilt or judgment.

A support group may help those who are in **different grief stages**, ranging from those who are traumatized in their early grief, to those who need help to process their grief from a loss long ago.

The groups provide **empathy, encouragement and understanding** within a safe, non-judgmental environment. Some people find that by sharing their experiences of suicide loss with those people further along their grief journey, they are able to see some hope that life can go on.

SOSBSA support groups are strictly **confidential** and are run by volunteers. Professional counseling is not offered within the support group, however it is also an option chosen by many bereaved by suicide, especially in early grief.

Attending Your First SOSBSA Support Group???

The thought of walking into a room of “strangers” can be very daunting but once you arrive you will realise it’s a lot easier than you anticipated – here are people who really “understand”. The purpose of a support group is to support each other and to help each other through your grief “work” by sharing stories, coping techniques, new understandings and friendship and to be there to encourage each other through “set backs”.

- Groups are usually run by the facilitator or another attendee, someone who is bereaved themselves.
- What is discussed within the group is confidential and this is made known to all attending.
- Meetings vary in size from 4 to 12 people.
- After introductions, attendees are invited to recount their stories though you don’t have to speak. Yes, there usually are tears, many of them, but that is ok.
- The facilitator or another attendee may gently encourage you to expand on a particular point which may be troubling you and in general discussion others may talk about how they handled that particular issue.
- After everyone who wants to recount their stories have had their turn, a particular issue brought up by an attendee may be discussed or the facilitator may initiate a discussion about a particular issue/issues. Sometimes he/she may inform the group of research findings, news items, grief and loss matters or discuss mental health/illness information.
- As the meeting progresses, people usually begin to relax and it is not unusual to hear laughter.
- The final half hour is usually spent mixing informally, drinking tea/coffee and eating.
- Some people come to many meetings in a row, others drop in every so often and others may come every couple of years just to be with others who understand.
- If you are within the first 6 months of your loss, it can be very daunting to hear so many stories at once. If you would like some advice you can call us on (1300 767 022) and we may have some recommendations.
- The groups are for those over 18. Ask your facilitator for information about other local services, including support for children.

SOSBSA Support Groups

Details of when and where SOSBSA support groups operate please see our website at www.sosbsa.org.au under Support Groups or check our latest newsletter.

Our website also includes details of other support groups throughout Australia.

QLD Helplines

Standby Brisbane 07 3250 1856
Standby Response Service 0438 150 180
(24 hour mobile crisis response to suicide bereavement)
Sunshine and Cooloola Coasts 0407 766 961

National Helplines

LifeLine: 13 11 14 (24 hour)
Mensline: 1300 789 978 (24 hour)
Suicide Callback Line: 1300 659 467 (24 hour)
National Hope Line: 1300 467 354 (24 hour bereavement support)
Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800 (24 hour)
SANE Helpline: 1800 18 SANE (M-F 9am-5pm)

Photo by Pia Koskelainen