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Caring, Support, Awareness, Education
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January – March 2018

“What were they Thinking?” *- Kenneth McKenna (www.oursideofsuicide.com)*

It's been over a year now since the day my best friend and brother made the decision to take his life. I have a unique understanding and insight of what one might be thinking when you're backed into a corner, and the time clock of life is ticking loudly in your head. You see I'm not only a survivor of his suicide but I have survived my own suicide attempt.

I've also been backed into that "deliberation of death corner" more than once. It's an awful place to be. Everything comes rushing through your mind like a freight train about to derail. As hard as you try to keep the train on the tracks, derailment seems inevitable. As you contemplate your choices and foresee the outcomes like a movie you've watched a million times, that instinctual human conscience we all possess, ties your conception of right and wrong into a ball of knots. Unlike the decisions we all face in our daily lives, this decision carries consequences that will deeply affect and alter the lives of many people that are near and dear to you. I've heard it said that suicide is weak and selfish.

The tortuous thoughts that plagued my mind were not about myself, and far from self pity or the "Poor Me's". Your conscience asks you, "Will they hate me" ? And the repetitive thoughts of, "My God, I don't want to hurt anyone else but I just can't go on like this" consume you. It becomes a tortuous cycle of thoughts that push you closer to the edge you're walking towards. It's at the edge of that ledge where the pain of hanging on can become greater than the pain of letting go.

In my case what seemed to be an insignificant event, happened at a very significant time in my life, causing me to pause long enough to interrupt the cycle of torturous thoughts. I am grateful every minute of every day that I did not act on my thoughts but I also understand how someone could get trapped in the cycle of thoughts and not see any way out. Because of my insight I realize it's much more complicated than the thoughts that losing a loved one to suicide present us with. The questions of, "Was there something more I could've done?" "Was it something I said, or didn't say?" These are both normal human reactions to a hard to understand tragedy where there are many unresolved issues and unanswered questions. I can tell you with all honesty that through those times I never stopped loving or caring for those who cared and loved me. No one event, person, place or thing, started my thoughts of ending it all. I don't condone suicide as a permanent solution to temporary problems, but also don't condemn those unfortunate souls who didn't get the second chance I got.

Christmas Event 2017

- SOSBSA Support Group Annerley



We had a very pleasant gathering at our Christmas function this year which was held instead of our normal support group meeting at Annerley.

A big thank you to all who came it is great when we can get together outside the formality of group – and we are very sorry we forgot to take pictures before some had left. Missing are Margie, Alice and Tim, and of course Cherrie took the picture.



Presidents Report

- *Cherrie Cran*

Hi everyone and welcome to the first newsletter for 2018. We hope that you all had a peaceful Christmas and New Year.

This newsletter

I have had nearly 8 years of attending support groups, and 7 years as facilitator. In this time it has become obvious to me that the most burning questions survivors have is “why?” and “what were they thinking?”. In this newsletter we attempt to provide some explanation to these burning questions. By no means do we profess to know the answers to these questions, because ultimately for your particular loved one there might be no answer. As the ones left behind we can turn ourselves in knots and drive ourselves into despair looking for the answer, and we probably will never fully understand their reasoning. After all, it is a personal thing for your loved one. Whether, like me, you watched your loved one suffer with their own mental turmoil and feel you understand or if it came out of the blue, we weren't inside their heads and we can't fully know.

These articles go some of the way to helping you find some peace though. If you don't find anything in these articles that resonates with you and your loved one, please use the internet and publications that go into more detail if you feel the need. Ultimately for most of us, we reach a point of acceptance that there is no answer to these questions, and things are as they are.

I do want to urge all of you to know that even without knowing, you are not at fault, you did not cause your loved one to end their own life. You are not alone, and we are always here for you if you need someone. Please join our Facebook community or come to support group if you can.



This year is a big one for SOSBSA – we are 20 years old. Early in 1998 SOS Survivors of Suicide Bereavement Support Association Inc. was founded by Bruce Dimmock a local Behavioural Counsellor.

We will be doing something special to celebrate such an awesome milestone – and are looking for ideas. What would you like to do to mark this special occasion for us as an association. Please email me at secretary@sosbsa.org.au or private message Donna through our Facebook page.

You can read more about the history of SOSBSA on our website on the ‘about us’ page – at <http://www.sosbsa.org.au/About-us.php>.

Newsletters

If anyone has anything they would like us to publish in this newsletter please send them through to secretary@sosbsa.org.au as we are always looking for newsletter content.

!!2018 AGM!!

We will be holding the 2018 AGM on

23rd February 2017 at 7pm

Healthy Options

473 Annerley Road, Annerley (Cnr Fanny Street)

Our regular support group meeting will follow at **8pm**

Note: you must be a paid financial member to vote at the AGM and to hold office

ALL WELCOME

Annual General Meeting

The 2018 AGM will be held on 23rd February. We are calling for nominations to join our committee. If you are interested in volunteering to help us run SOSBSA, please let us know before the night. If you are a financial member and can't make it – please feel free to send us your proxy (attached). A membership form is also attached.

Membership

If you aren't yet a financial member I'd like to encourage you to join us. Our association is run completely by volunteers and we don't receive any on-going funding. We rely completely on our membership fees and donations to operate and provide support to those who need us. To vote or stand office you must be a financial member.



SOSBSA Get-Together
*Glindemann Park, Logan Rd, Holland Park
(Logan Road side)*
Sunday 18th March at 1:00pm
BYO plate to share, picnic blanket, chairs
Contact secretary@sosbsa.org.au or
private message through Facebook for details

Fundraising

We are always looking for ways to raise funds, so if anyone has any ideas for fundraising please let us know. If you wish to make a donation or become a member, you can do so on our website at www.sosbsa.org.au under 'about us'. All donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

Take care and be kind to yourself

Cherrie xoxo

Brisbane Support Group
(473 Annerley Road Annerley)

Friday fortnightly at 7:30pm

January- 12, 26

February - 9, 23(8pm after AGM at 7pm)

March - 9, 23

Contact: Cherrie 0423 567 055



Management Committee



President: Cherrie Cran

Vice President: Donna Cumming

Treasurer: Darrin Larney

Secretary: Sinead McMullan

Members: Vacant

Other S.O.S.B.S.A. Support Group Meetings

Cairns Support Group

Cairns Red Cross Wellbeing Centre Cnr Grove and Lake Street, Cairns
Entrance off Grove Street.
2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm.

Contact Fran: 4045 2955
or 0407 695 891

Bundaberg Support Group

Neighbourhood Centre
111 Targo Street, Bundaberg
2nd Wednesday of every month at 10:30 am

Contact Peter: 07 4155 1015

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Membership

Pensioner / Student	\$20
Adult member	\$30
Family	\$50
Not-For-Profit Org.	\$50
Affiliate Business	\$100

You are now able to do this all online:
www.sosbsa.org.au (About us tab/Membership)
or contact secretary@sosbsa.org.au

Memberships help pay for printing, copying, mailing
and our telephone help line.

SOSBSA Phone

Volunteers WANTED

We are looking for expressions of interest
regarding volunteering for our
1300 help line.

Training will be provided.

Contact secretary@sosbsa.org.au
or 1300 767 022 for more information.

Newsletter Contributions

We are always looking for articles to run in our newsletter. If you would like to share something or found something you think might benefit others please email me at secretary@sosbsa.org.au.

SOSBSA Facebook

We now have more than **18,400** people who follow us on facebook.

Join in our online support group.

Search **SOSBSA**



Other Suicide Support Groups

If our support groups don't meet your needs – please check our website for a list of other support groups across Australia

Go to www.sosbsa.org.au

Hover over 'Support Groups' in the top bar
Choose the appropriate sub-section.

Please note – this information is only as good as the information we are provided – if you see errors please let us know at secretary@sosbsa.org.au

Items for Sale

You can now purchase items from us online with payments through paypal
www.sosbsa.org.au ('Items for Sale' tab)

Mourning Dove Pin

Purchase one of our beautiful pewter Mourning Dove pins to honour and remember your loved one

\$8.00 each (+\$3 postage)



Grief's Little Emergency Kit

Gentle reminders to keep us strong.
Fits perfectly into a handbag or drawer.
A small gift to give someone who grieves when you feel lost for words

\$4.00 each (+\$3 postage)



or email us at secretary@sosbsa.org.au

Grief

I had my own notion of grief.
I thought it was the sad time
That followed the death of someone you love.
And you had to push through it
To get to the other side.

But I'm learning there is no other side.
There is no pushing through.
But rather,
There is
Absorption.
Adjustment.
Acceptance.

And grief is not something you complete,
But rather, you endure.
Grief is not a task to finish
And move on,

But an element of yourself-
An alteration of your being.
A new way of seeing.
A new definition of self.

- Gwen Flowers

Why People Kill Themselves

- *Natasha Tracy (www.healthyplace.com)*

The truth is, we rarely know why any, single individual commits suicide. Suicide always takes a person's life and leaves questions behind.

That being said, there are common themes that people who have attempted suicide and survived tend to repeat as to why they tried to take their lives. These are likely the reasons others have killed themselves.

Reasons People Kill Themselves

People Would Be Better Off Without Me

Suicidal people often think, quite incorrectly, that everyone, and the world at large, would be better off without them. What makes these people commit suicide is that they feel like they are a burden on others or have a negative impact on others. Suicidal people are often incapable of seeing all the good they offer others and the world. Even though every person has a positive impact in some way, some people are so wrapped up in suicidal thoughts, they can't see this.



I Want the Pain to End

People who kill themselves are often in extreme pain either due to a mental illness like depression or due to horrible life circumstances. For example, according to a study on people who attempted suicide, we know that major risk factors for a suicide attempt include:

- Extreme anxiety/panic attacks, depression
- Recent loss of a close, personal relationship
- Anhedonia (an inability to feel pleasure)
- Chronic or deteriorating illness
- Inability to maintain work or school
- Recent diagnosis of life-threatening illness

Suicidal people find this pain overwhelming and that causes them to kill themselves.

Hopelessness, Another Reason People Kill Themselves

The same study shows that hopelessness is felt by 64% of suicide attempters and helplessness by 62%. In short, people kill themselves because they don't see the hope of anything getting better in the future and they feel helpless to make a positive change. We know, however, this isn't true. People always have the power to choose life and hope. There are always options to suicide.

Substance Abuse

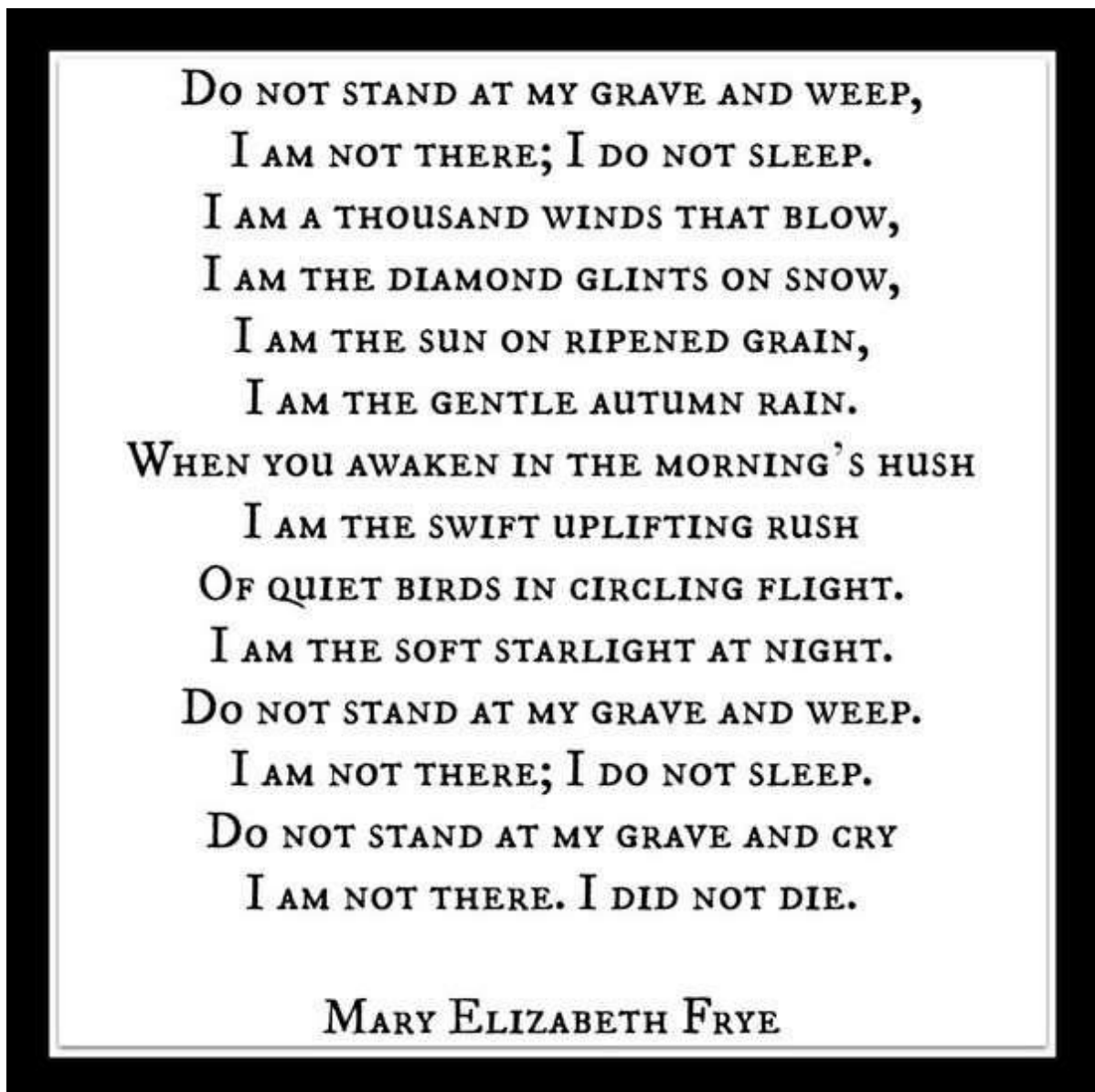
While people may not kill themselves specifically because of substance abuse, substance abuse is highly correlated with suicide, likely because it decreases the inhibitions that keep people from taking their own lives. In the above study, 68% of people who attempted suicide were also abusing substances (drugs and/or alcohol).

Mental Illness

While not everyone who commits suicide has a diagnosable mental illness, most do. Most commonly the mental illness is bipolar, depression or an anxiety disorder. This mental illness can create pain, as noted above, or can even create a delusional state wherein a person feels compelled to commit suicide by an unseen force.

Questions After People Kill Themselves

For those left behind, the reasons that their loved ones suicide become important as a way of coping with the death. However, it's important to realize that we will never truly know the motivation of someone who has taken his or her life, but what matters is that it is not the survivor's fault. Suicide isn't logical, doesn't make sense and even knowing the reasons won't make it so. What matters is acceptance, forgiveness and moving forward.



How We Survive

If we are fortunate,
we are given a warning.

If not,
there is only the sudden horror,
the wrench of being torn apart;
of being reminded
that nothing is permanent,
not even the ones we love,
the ones our lives revolve around.

Life is a fragile affair.
We are all dancing
on the edge of a precipice,
a dizzying cliff so high
we can't see the bottom.

One by one,
we lose those we love most
into the dark ravine.

So we must cherish them
without reservation.
Now.
Today.
This minute.
We will lose them
or they will lose us
someday.
This is certain.
There is no time for bickering.
And their loss
will leave a great pit in our hearts;
a pit we struggle to avoid
during the day
and fall into at night.
Some,
unable to accept this loss,
unable to determine
the worth of life without them,
jump into that black pit

spiritually or physically,
hoping to find them there.
And some survive
the shock,
the denial,
the horror,
the bargaining,
the barren, empty aching,
the unanswered prayers,
the sleepless nights
when their breath is crushed
under the weight of silence
and all that it means.

Somehow, some survive all that and,
like a flower opening after a storm,
they slowly begin to remember
the one they lost
in a different way...

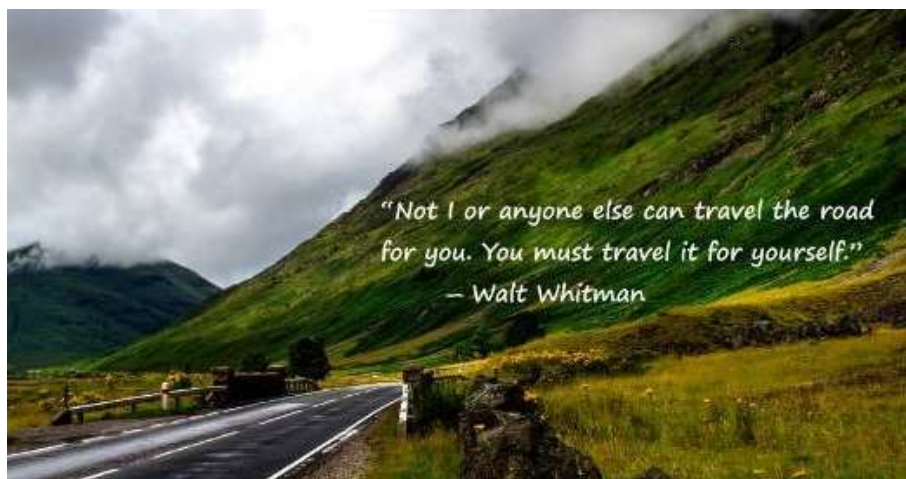
The laughter,
the irrepressible spirit,
the generous heart,
the way their smile made them feel,
the encouragement they gave
even as their own dreams were dying.

And in time, they fill the pit
with other memories
the only memories that really matter.

We will still cry.
We will always cry.
But with loving reflection
more than hopeless longing.

And that is how we survive.
That is how the story should end.
That is how they would want it to be.

© Mark Rickerby



In Memoriam



If you would like an 'in memoriam', please send an anniversary record to us at secretary@sosbsa.org.au.

For everyone whose anniversary of their loved one is during January to March: On this anniversary of your loved one's death, may you remember the best experiences you shared, the most meaningful words that were spoken, the happiest moments you had together and the comfort that has given you the courage to go on.

Loved one lost to suicide: **Neville Graham Dykes**

Date of Birth: 28 Jan 1950

Message: 7 years have gone by without your presence in my life. I miss your face, your laughter & your touch. I just miss you & that will never change. Loved & remembered every day your soulmate, Donna ❤️

Your Name: Donna Cumming

Date of Death: 31 Jan 2011

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)