



S.O.S.  
SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE  
BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT  
ASSOCIATION INC.

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*Caring, Support, Awareness, Education*  
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## 5 Tips for Supporting a Teen with Depression

- Steve Johnson



Image via [Pixabay](#)

Teen suicide is the leading cause of death in people aged 15-24 and a growing problem in Australia. The teenage years bring an abundance of change, as well as brand new feelings and situations. Some young people find it more difficult than others to navigate through the unpredictable experiences of the time, and they don't always let others know they're struggling. It's crucial for parents to provide support and understanding, and to know what warning signs to look out for. Here are five tips for supporting your teen:

### 1. Communicate

Keeping the lines of communication open is crucial for any relationship, but it has special importance with your children. Talk to him! Have real conversations about school or life or that family vacation coming up in a few weeks. And don't just ask how his day was and move on — ask him about what he did, who he hung out with, and what all happened. Be engaged and ask questions or share your own experiences with him. If something seems off about his mood even though he said his day was good, check in with him. Pull him aside (away from others) and ask if there's anything going on.

Keep in mind that mental illness, like depression, can make teens less likely to communicate with their parents. If your teen is becoming increasingly withdrawn and no amount of effort is overcoming it, there may be something more serious going on and you should consider talking to a professional for advice.

When he does open up to you, do one thing...

## 2. Listen

Really listen. It's a basic idea that too often gets pushed to the wayside because we get caught up in our own lives and end up tuning out those around us. Actively listen to what he's saying and try to understand; ask questions only as needed to clarify and nod to show him you're engaged. Sometimes the best therapy is simply feeling heard, and providing that outlet for your teen can make a world of difference. If he isn't forthcoming right away or all the time, be patient and let him know that you'll be there whenever he's ready.

## 3. Know the signs of teen depression

Although asking for help is a crucial part of recovering from any loss or struggle, many teens worry it will be perceived as a sign of weakness and internalize everything they're feeling. Don't be like many parents who make the tragic mistake of disregarding depressed behaviour as the moody actions of a teenager. Signs of teen depression include:

Changes in sleep patterns and appetite

- Anger, irritability
- Social withdrawal
- Trouble in school
- Loss of interest in favourite activities
- Low self-esteem

If your teen is exhibiting one or more of these signs, talk to him about how he's feeling and what you can do to support him or consider setting him up to see a therapist or family counsellor. If your teen is resistant to counselling, consider trying an alternative therapy—e.g. aquatic therapy can be hugely beneficial to people who are experiencing or have experienced depression and anxiety.

## 4. Know suicide warning signs

Teens sometimes become so overwhelmed with depression that they decide the only option is to end their lives.

Warning signs of suicide include:

- Depression
- Decreased attention to appearance
- Moodiness
- Giving away possessions
- Anxiety or agitation
- Trouble concentrating

If you have reason to believe that your teen may be suicidal, act immediately. Talk to him and gently raise the idea of seeing a mental health professional for help.

## 5. Be alert for sudden mood shifts

If you've noticed your teen has been down lately and he suddenly perks up, don't write it off as problem solved. Sometimes, a person who has officially decided they're going to commit suicide displays a period of euphoria because they believe that the pain will soon be over. It can cause them to feel so much relief that they aren't even phased by bad news or situations.

Talk to your teen every single day and most importantly: listen. Even if he tries to shut you out, keep talking to him and asking about his life. It's important he knows that you're genuinely interested in him because you care about him, and most importantly, that you'll always be there for him no matter what.

**Steve Johnson** co-created [PublicHealthLibrary.org](http://PublicHealthLibrary.org) with a fellow pre-med student. The availability of accurate health facts, advice, and general answers is something Steve wants for all people, not just those in the health and medical field. He continues to spread trustworthy information and resources through the website, but also enjoys tennis and adding to his record collection in his spare time.

# Presidents Report

- *Cherrie Cran*

Hi everyone and welcome to the third newsletter for 2016. It's hard to believe that half the year has already gone – and we say this every year. But here we are in the last half of the year again.

Our Committee has been working hard on updating all our resources to ensure that you have the most up to date, relevant and quality information available to you.

Our Facebook community has grown to over 11,000 and is attracting more than 100 new people each week. If you haven't yet joined our Facebook community, please visit us and know that we are there online, operating as an online support group to people from all over the world.

## **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.

## **Fundraising**

Upcoming event – 22<sup>nd</sup> October – the Logan Community Book Sale shop at Logan Central Library.

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](http://www.sosbsa.org.au). Under the 'about us' tab you will see Membership and Donations if you hover over the 'about us' tab. All donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

## **Newsletters**

We are always on the lookout for quality articles to share in our newsletters. The best of these are often your personal stories, and ideas of things that helped you move through your grief, or things that you have learnt from your experience. If you have anything that you would like to share with everyone, please email me at [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).

Take care and be kind to yourself

*Cherrie xoxo*





HREC approval number: HC15088

## How do adolescents experience the death of a relative or a friend?

We are looking for young people to participate in a study. We want to learn about the impact of death on adolescents, and how to better help bereaved adolescents.

You can take part in this study, if you:

- Have lost a relative or a friend through suicide or other type of death when you were aged between 12 and 18 years old
- Experienced the loss between 6 months and 10 years ago

You can also participate in the study if you have NOT experienced such a loss during the past ten years

What do you have to do?

The study consists of two parts. You might participate in part 1 and/or in part 2. In the first part of the study we will talk with you (by telephone) on how you have experienced the loss, how this might have affected your personal life and relationships, and what helped or hindered coping with the loss. We will also ask you to fill in a questionnaire.

If you participate in the second part of the study, we will ask you to fill out a questionnaire only.

All participants will receive a \$20 movie or iTunes voucher, as a token of our appreciation.

For more information, contact Karl Andriessen at:  
k.andriessen@student.unsw.edu.au or phone: 0405 627 748

Info on our website: <http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/research/Adolescentgrief.cfm>

Recruitment flyer – 22Febr2016

**Brisbane Support Group**  
(473 Annerley Road Annerley)

Friday fortnightly at 7:30pm

July - 1, 15, 29

August - 12, 26

September - 9, 23

Contact: Cherrie 0423 567 055



## Management Committee



**President:** Cherrie Cran

**Vice President:** Donna Cumming

**Treasurer:** Darrin Larney

**Secretary:** Sinead McMullan

**Members:** Eva Sutorowski

Vacant

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

### Gladstone Support Group

*Currently not operating formally*

Please Contact Michaelle on 0413 121 512

*If you need support*

### Cairns Support Group

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

**Disclaimer:** Unless expressly stated, the views expressed in articles, poetry etc in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of SOSBSA. Any articles, poems, quotes that are stated as 'author unknown' within this newsletter are reproduced in good faith and do not intentionally contravene copyright laws.

### 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](http://www.sosbsa.org.au) (About us tab/Membership)

or contact [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto: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](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au)  
or 1300 767 022 for more information.

## SOSBSA Facebook

We now have more than **11,000** people who follow us on facebook.

Join in our online support group.

Search **SOSBSA**



### Don't Tell Me

Please don't tell me you know how I feel,

Unless you have lost your child too.

Please don't tell me my broken heart will heal,

Because that is just not true.

Please don't tell me my son is in a better place,

Though it is true, I want him here with me.

Don't tell me someday I'll hear his voice, see his face,

Beyond today I cannot see.

Don't tell me it is time to move on,

Because I cannot.

Don't tell me to face the fact he is gone,

Because denial is something I can't stop.

Don't tell me to be thankful for the time I had,

Because I wanted more.

Don't tell me when I am my old self you will be glad,

I'll never be as I was before.

What you can tell me is you will be here for me,

That you will listen when I talk of my child.

You can share with me my precious memories,

You can even cry with me for a while.

And please don't hesitate to say his name,

Because it is something I long to hear everyday.

Friend please realize that I can never be the same,

But if you stand by me,

You may like the new person I become someday.

## Call for Stamp Donations.

You can help us by donating unused stamps for us to use.

It all helps to keep our costs down so we can use our valuable funds in other ways to support the bereaved.

It all helps

Please post to:

P.O. Box 334  
Springwood Qld 4127



## Items for Sale

You can now purchase items from us online with payments through paypal

[www.sosbsa.org.au](http://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](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au)

# Other Suicide Support Groups

If you would like to add your suicide support group to this page, please email [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au)

## Sunshine Coast

### Caloundra Living Beyond Suicide Support Group

42 Croydon Avenue  
Currimundi

Jeanine and Ron —5491 7452

Meetings are held every 1st  
Monday of the month at  
10:00am-12 noon.



## Gold Coast

### Lifeline

2791 Gold Coast Road  
Broadbeach

Monthly: 1st Friday of the  
month

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Phone: 5579 6000

## Chermside

### Lifeline Brisbane North

766 Gympie Road  
Chermside

Monthly: 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each  
month at 6:00pm—8:00pm

Contact: Lyndall Stafford

Email:

[enquiries@ucommunity.org.au](mailto:enquiries@ucommunity.org.au)

Phone: 07 3624 2400



### Also

Lifeline facilitates an 8-week closed  
therapeutic group for the bereaved  
by suicide (daytime at Chermside  
and night time at Fortitude Valley).  
Contact: Lyndall Stafford at above  
phone number or email address.

## VIC

### Survivors of Suicide Inc.

515 Chilsolm St

Ballarat

Monthly: 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday the month  
at 7:00-9:00pm.

Contact: Pauline: 0438 535 799  
or Kristy 0427 762 92

[www.survivorsofsuicide.com.au](http://www.survivorsofsuicide.com.au)

## NSW

### Lifeline Harbour To Hawkesbury

4 Park Ave, Gordon, NSW  
Monthly: 2nd Thursday of the  
month 7-9pm.

Phone: 02 9498 8805

Email: [admin@lifelineh2h.com](mailto:admin@lifelineh2h.com)

### Lifeline MidCoast NSW

Sherwood Road Port Macquarie.



Meetings held on the 4th

Wednesday of the month.

Contact Lee-Ann 02 6581 2800

or email

[lifematters@lifelinemidcoast](mailto:lifematters@lifelinemidcoast)

[.org.au](http://.org.au)

If you wish to receive this newsletter via email, please email us at  
[secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au)

# “They took themselves home” a mediums perspective

- Charmaine Wilson

Suicide, the word has the power to evoke a million different responses in the same amount of people and for that reason I prefer to use the term ‘they took themselves home’

I remember the time of day; the weather and exactly where I was when I got the news my best friend had taken his own life. It is something you never quite forget and I can still hear the exact words that were said to me.

I had spoken to him only that morning. He had sent a text at 4.45am and I had woken at 5.30am. I saw the text and called him immediately as it seemed an odd text to send.

He assured me all was ok and that he was happy and he outfoxed me. He was lying through his teeth but in my relief to hear him answer the phone, I believed his story.

And this is one thing they are very good at. In many cases there is a pattern of being very happy the week or weekend prior to the act. I have considered that once they make the choice, there is a certain relief in their souls and for that reason they appear normal again or much happier than they have been. This type of behaviour will set you at ease and you may be off your guard when the actual event takes place.

You need to forgive yourself for that immediately.

This is part of the disease that ultimately takes them back home.



In recent years I have found a pattern in suicide victims. In the young ones that take their own lives (15 – 25) you may have found they had indulged in Hydro Marijuana or other illegal drugs. In 7 out of 8 readings I have done when young men are the victims this is the one common factor.

In women and young and old lately there has been a social media connection. These two facts are not absolute but worth having a look at to see if your loved one may have been affected.

In the older population there seems to be a sense of financial or relationship failure or long-term alcohol and drug abuse.

People who take themselves home have a disease called depression. It may or may not be obvious. People who are healthy in the mind will not take the final steps, only those who have fought the disease as much they can and cannot see the light at the end of a long dark tunnel will make the choice to leave.

Not everyone treats himself or herself for depression - some self medicate. Some really try to get better but sometimes the treatment just does not work or is not effective. If someone had diabetes and did



not treat their disease correctly the consequences would be the same, they could pass through neglect of the disease. The same with depression if it is not recognised or treated correctly- it can kill.

Like all spirits who pass away they cross immediately though also like all spirits who cross they most likely participate in a life review - this is my feeling. They can also see the affect they had on those left behind. They are not treated any differently in the spirit realms than someone who passed through diabetes. They also are happy to back with those who have gone before them and are treated with love and happiness upon their arrival. It was not their fault their mind was unwell.

When someone decides to take themselves home they do not realise you care, they are in a black abyss in which all they can see is their own perceived failures or darkness. They are not thinking of you or anyone in that moment, they are only thinking about being free of whatever delusions their unhealthy mind has fed them. This is never between you and them.

Although you may be able to string together events that may have been the 'straw that broke the camels back' by no means should you lay the blame for this death on anyone else, no matter how badly you think they may be responsible. It is neither fair nor valid to say someone was the sole cause of the action taken. Usually this type of depression starts unseen and can lay dormant for many years and each year more and more things can increase it. To blame anyone is only taking the focus off your own recovery from this terrible tragedy.

Do not hate them for what they did, do get angry for a while if you must but most importantly remember that they loved you and though they forgot or seemed to forget you loved them too they will definitely know it now - keep sending them

love. They can feel that. They can feel any emotion you send to them. If someone you love has taken himself or herself home you need to be very kind to yourself and everyone else.

There will never be a definite answer as to why it was that day, that moment the only thing you will ever know for sure is that they are 'home' and if you can understand that 'home/heaven' is a place where all our earthly worries cease to exist then you will understand they are whole again. The most important thing you can do if someone you loved has taken themselves home is educate yourself about depression and its causes.

Understand you cannot look at someone and see what he or she is thinking. No one can ever know exactly what lies behind someone else's eyes. Stop beating yourself up saying you should have known as they are very good at masking when they are making the final choices.

Remember that 8 people in Australia make this choice everyday. You are not alone in your grief and there are a multitude of support groups out there. You do not have to do this journey alone.

I hope this article has helped some of you understand suicide and I urge you to be kind to yourself.

You may never be satisfied you have an answer but just know they were not well.

If you are having suicidal thoughts I urge you to contact Life Line at 13 11 14  
<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Also contact Beyond Blue to find out as much about why people suicide. When you are educated it will make your grief journey a more informed one.  
<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

If you have any questions regarding this article please email me at  
info@spiritwhispers.org

# In Memoriam



If you would like an 'in memoriam', please send an anniversary record to us at [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).

**For everyone whose anniversary of their loved one is during July to September :** 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: **Tiffany Harris**

Date of Birth: 20 September 1990

Message: Died aged 23 years- too young. Loved and missed by her Mum, Anne. Wishing you peace and calm seas wherever you are xo

Your Name: *Anne Harris*

Date of Birth: 19 Sept 1987

## 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)**