



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

Caring, Support, Awareness, Education

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Issue No. 5

September / October 2012

My Story

-- Marleen Blake, Cairns Qld.



Hello my name is Marleen and I am a survivor of suicide [attempts].

The question asked has been, "how could you do that to me... don't you love us?" Then statements were given to me "you are selfish, you are weak" all these by my next of kin. Did they understand or know how ill I was? No, but neither did I know just how ill I was myself. I would like to state that there is nothing glorious about attempting suicide. The glorious is when you don't die and are able to recover and are rescued from that place where I would not even send my worst enemy.

To give some insight into what sort of place I found myself in on the 10th October 2010, I felt as though I was being dragged and sucked into this dark brown vacuum. I felt myself sliding down into this tunnel where there was absolutely no light, no hope and no feelings. There were no thoughts about anyone else what-so-ever. It was the most hopeless place of being and it encompassed my thoughts, my feelings and my very being. There was no way, no strength within me to be able to navigate my way out of that dreadful space.

If not for talking to someone from Lifeline for one hour, and at the very last minute ringing a friend as I stared death in the eyes there was a small change of heart. But it was enough for others to step in and take over and do what I couldn't. I was totally powerless and unable to extricate myself and do something which I would recognize as saving myself.

But I was saved, that is the most important thing and I am being saved to live life every single day. I have a wonderful team of support now. I work constantly on my own thought-life as that was where the stronghold was. For over 50 years I had had suicidal thoughts and had acted on them although not as seriously as on that awful day. I can say that now occasionally a thought about suicide will come in to my mind but I know I don't have to give it any power. I look at the thought, recognize it is there, but I don't have to act on it. I use mindfulness a lot which is a tool that helps me to overcome these thoughts. I recommend it highly for anyone who is plagued by persistent thoughts of anything from self harm, suicide, homicide what-ever. It works and you can practice it anywhere and at anytime which is another reason for me as I am a busy working woman who is also still doing study at university.

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2012 Meeting Dates for the Annerley Support Group (Brisbane)

Friday fortnightly at 7:30pm

September 14, 28

October 12, 26

November 9, 23

December 7, 21

Management Committee

President: Cherrie Cran

Vice President: Donna Cumming

Treasurer: Darrin Larney

Secretary: Jennifer McMahon

Fundraising Coordinator: Lauren Leslie

Members: Elna Rongonui & Mark Williams

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

Brisbane Support Group

DrugArm Auditorium
473 Annerley Road, Annerley (Cnr Fanny St)

Fortnightly from Friday 6th January 7:30 pm

Contact 1300 767 022

Cairns Support Group

Cairns Red Cross, Douglas House
198 Grafton St, Cairns

2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm.

Contact Fran on 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 on 4155 1015

Mackay Support Group

Gordon White Library Meeting Room
54 Phillip Street, Mt Pleasant, Mackay

2nd Saturday of every month at 2 pm

Contact Renee on 0412 448 805
or Kim on 0430 186 149

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Become an SOSBSA member for 2012!

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

Visit www.sosbsa.org.au or contact secretary@sosbsa.org.au for membership form or to renew.

“Perhaps they are not stars,
but rather openings in
heaven where the love of
our lost ones pours through
and shines down upon us to
let us know they are
happy.”

Eskimo Proverb

President's Report

Hi everyone welcome to the September/October newsletter and to spring.

I know that Father's Day was only a few days ago, and I'd like to pass on our thoughts for those who have lost a father to suicide and those fathers who have lost children. These special days carry with them their own pain. I do hope that you had the best day possible and took some time to remember your lost loved ones.

Thank you to all of you who came out in the rain for the Candlelight Memorial in July, it was a lovely time of celebration of our loved ones.

We also held a community book sale at the Logan Central Library and we raised \$200 on the day. Thank you to all who purchased books, and to Anne for helping me run the store. Also a special thanks to Logan Library for making this possible.



There are a couple of things coming up that I would like to mention:

1. World Suicide Prevention Day is on 10 September. We don't have any official function or events happening. If you would like to take part in the 'Out of Shadows into the Light' walk on the day, you will find the details on page 8.
2. International Survivors of Suicide Day is on 17 November. On this day we get together and watch a DVD that is sent to us. Groups all over the world watch the DVD at the same time. This is well worth attending if you can make it. We'll advise you of the location and time as we get closer to the date. Hope to see you there.

Sydney Conference Update (see also page 6)

Since the conference in Sydney at the end of June there hasn't been any news of the national group that is going to be established, so I don't have any update on that for you all.

However, I did tell you that I would give you more information about the conference this newsletter, so I will endeavor to share with you some of the experience.

Darrin and I arrived on Thursday evening, and as a result we missed out on Thursday's pre-conference workshops. However, the two days that we were there were jammed packed with great speakers and presentations. Included amongst the speakers were some who came all the way from the USA and had good things to say about what we are doing in Australia in the field of postvention and suicide prevention. This was good to hear, however, as we aren't seeing any significant drop in the number of suicides, clearly there's still much more to be done.

The Keynote speakers included Dr Madelyn Gould, Jerry Reed, Dr Michelle Linn-Gust and Dr John R Jordan from the USA, along with Prof. Ian Webster from the University of New South Wales, Prof. Graham Martin and Judith Murray both from the University of Queensland, Dr Diana Sands from the Bereaved by Suicide Centre in Sydney amongst many other highly respected speakers.

To give you the details of each of their talks would take a lot of time and space, so I won't go into that here. If you would like to read Hope for Life's official report on the conference you can find it on their website at <http://suicideprevention.salvos.org.au/postvention-conference> and is well worth the read.

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President's Report cont.

There were four streams of workshops occurring at any time, and as there was only two of us, sadly we could only take part in half of them. I would like to share with you some of the common themes that came out over the two days. A lot of speakers had personal experiences of having lost a loved one to suicide. They spoke of how the loss had not only changed them and their lives forever, but they had also found a new purpose in their life since suffering that loss, and that is to support others through their experience and genuine caring. The common messages they had were about taking care of yourself, allowing yourself to take whatever time is needed to rebuild your lives, don't expect that you will ever 'get over' the loss instead work toward accepting that this is who you are now.

I know these things are things that you hear from us often, and it was good to hear them again and to be reminded of how important it is to not expect that we will ever be the same person we were before suffering that loss.

I know that many of you are not in a place to reach out to others, don't worry about that. That isn't the message I want you to take away from this. I would like you to remember that you are not alone, that there are many many others who have lost loved ones to suicide, and that you need to take care of yourself, be kind to yourself. Allow yourself whatever time you need, and grieve in whatever way you need. That said, if you are finding things too difficult or feel 'stuck' then please seek out help from a professional and don't feel bad about having to. Even some of the people in this world who are now leaders in the field of postvention suffered deeply and had to seek help.

You are not alone. There are many of us working toward providing the assistance you need, not just here in Queensland and Australia, but all over the world.

I will take this opportunity to remind you of our facebook community. To find us just search SOSBSA. We now have over 1300 people who have joined our community and there is a lot of support available there for anyone who needs to have a 'chat'.

There were two very personal highlights of the weekend also, there was the unveiling of the Hope for Life State Lifekeeper Memory Quilts. These are quilts with photos and tributes to our lost loved ones, one or more for each state. There will be an unveiling of the Queensland quilt here in Queensland somewhere at some time in the future - we'll keep you posted on that one.

Also there was a very special Healing and Remembrance Ceremony at the close of the conference. This was a special time to stop and remember our loved ones and was a lovely tribute to them.

I'm very much looking forward to the next conference and would love to see some of you attend. You will be well rewarded for your time and effort.

Take care of yourself and know that we are here for you. Please come along to a support group meeting near you. We now have groups in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Mackay and Cairns.

Love and peace to all of you

Cherrie

SOSBSA Get-Together

Due to lack of attendance, we are going to cancel our bi-monthly picnics, and will instead have a mid-year and Xmas function only.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Contact Cherrie on 0423 567 055 for any details.





Recovery Weekends

Join Bronwen, a sister to suicide, life coach and personal trainer for a weekend of recovery in Coolum Beach. Learn simple techniques to help you cope better and look after yourself during your grief and beyond.

0410640803

www.rosesintheocean.com.au

Call for Stamp Donations.

Thank you to those kind people who have sent in a few 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.



If you have a few stamps you could send our way, please post to:

**P.O. Box 334
Springwood Qld 4127**

Mourning Dove Pin



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

Price: \$8 each (+ \$3 postage)

Please submit any orders & cheques either by mail to:
P.O. Box 334
Springwood Qld 4127

or by email to
secretary@sosbsa.org.au

THANK YOU

Thank you to the **SCOPE Club of CAIRNS** for their generous donation. It is much appreciated and will go towards ongoing support to the bereaved. xxxx



Grief's Little Emergency Kit

A perfect reminder to be gentle with yourself during the grief process.

Can be given as a small gift to a grieving person when you just don't have 'the words'.

Fits into a handbag or drawer easily.

Price: \$4 AU (+ \$3 AU postage within Australia)

Order via email to secretary@sosbsa.org.au

3rd Australian Postvention Conference ~Sydney 28th - 30th June 2012



Our President, Cherrie Cran & our Treasurer, Darrin Larney enjoying the Sydney sun whilst attending the conference.



The unveiling of the Hope For Life "Lifekeeper Memory" Quilts.



The conference was informative and inspiring, and as always, was a wonderful opportunity to network with other organisations working towards understanding and eradicating suicide.

My Story

-- Marleen Blake, Cairns Qld.



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I know now that yes I do love those near to me, I am not weak, I am strong. I know that I have a mental illness which can lead to depression but I am a close monitor of my mental health and will seek help immediately now if I believe I am at risk. I also use my support team, my GP, my counsellor and my psychiatrist. But most of all I have been able to rebuild a close relationship with my daughter and we can talk now of things we never were able to.

I have been asked "was there anything that would have prevented me from trying to take my own life that day?" I tell people, "no!" I explain further that 2 weeks prior to this event I had disclosed to two mental health professionals and one friend how I was feeling, but because people have always seen me as the 'strong and capable' one they did not take me seriously. So if I had had intervention at that time then I do believe that I would not have been as lost as I was in that depressive state. However, as they say, hindsight is wonderful.

Now I look back and I am grateful for my life, that I have a chance to live and also pay back to society my debt of gratitude for being alive. My journey took a long time to come to that place of utter despair and I am grateful that it has not taken the same amount of time for me to be on the recovery journey. It is just that a journey, with one step at a time, sometimes one step forward and two steps back but I don't give up. I am determined to make a difference and work with those who like me feel that horrible darkness. To say I understand someone else would not be true, it is impossible, however I know what it was like for me and so from experience I can empathise and walk together with someone else on that recovery journey. That is now my goal and life passion because what I learnt is that life is great and is to be lived and shared.

Our Father Kept A Garden

Our Father kept a garden.
A garden of the heart;
He planted all the good things,
That gave our lives their start.

He turned us to the sunshine,
And encouraged us to dream:
Fostering and nurturing
The seeds of self-esteem.

And when the winds and rain came,
He protected us enough;
But not too much because he knew
We would stand up strong and
tough.

His constant good example,
Always taught us right from wrong;
Markers for our pathway that will last
a lifetime long.

We are our Fathers garden,
We are his legacy.
Thank you Dad we love you.

*To everyone grieving for their
father, and to all the grieving
fathers... we are thinking of
you this Father's Day. xxx*

reflection
recovery
hope
prevention

Join us as we walk...

Out of the Shadows and into the Light



WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY • 10 SEPTEMBER

Join Lifeline's community walks on 10 September as we recognise World Suicide Prevention Day.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians under the age of 44.

Lifeline believes most suicides are preventable and we all have a role to play.

Join an *Out of the Shadows* walk in your local community to show your support and commitment to preventing suicide and to remember those lost to suicide.



To find a walk near you or to register your own event visit outoftheshadows.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.

Sunshine Coast

Head High Young People Living Beyond Suicide Support Group

Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre
Fifth Avenue, Maroochydore
Linda —5479 0394

Meetings are held last Thursday of the month at 4:30 —6:30pm.

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: First Tuesday of each month
Time: 6:00pm—8:00pm
Contact: Lyndall Stafford
Email: enquiries@uccommunity.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.

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

Lifeline MidCoast NSW

Sherwood Road Port Macquarie.



Meetings held on the 4th Wednesday of the month.

Contact Lee-Ann on 02 6581 2800 or email

lifematters@lifelinemidcoast.org.au

If you wish to receive this newsletter via email, please contact us on secretary@sosbsa.org.au.

In Memoriam

If you would like an 'in memoriam', please send an anniversary record to SOSBSA, P.O. Box 334, Springwood 4127 or email to secretary@sosbsa.org.au.



Loved one lost to suicide: **Suzette Chantal Barker**

Date of Birth: **6th June 1974**

Message: **I see an eagle soaring when I am in different places. I feel you are near and flying free. Keep flying my darling. Mommy.**

Your Name: **Paulette Barker**

Date of Death: **4th Sept 2008**

Loved one lost to suicide: **Mike Daniel**

Date of Birth: **1st December 1961**

Message: **Loving brother, I carry you every day in my heart. I LOVE YOU!**

Your sister, **Mary**

Your Name: **Mary Fedor**

Date of Death: **28th September 1981**

Loved one lost to suicide: **Westley Morgan Jones**

Date of Birth: **29th August 1947**

Message: **My dearest husband, I love you, I miss you. I need you. Lots and lots of love, Nola.**

Your Name: **Nola Shepherd Simpson Jones**

Date of Death: **6th October 2009**

For everyone whose anniversary of their loved one is in September / October. 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.

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)

QLD

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

Photo by Ian Britton