



SURVIVORS

after suicide

A Program of Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2004 • VOLUME 17, NO. 1 • PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

Dealing with Grief and Bereavement During the Holidays

Whitney R. Bischoff

When you've lost a loved one, the holiday season can be a painful reminder of the terrible loss you are feeling—instead of bringing warmth, love, and excitement. The first few years are perhaps the most difficult, but even years later, the holidays may lack the joy they once had for you.

Be Realistic. We have a mental picture of how things ought to be. Often, however, those expectations are based more on fantasy than reality. Remember that you are grieving. Be kind and gentle with yourself, and realistic about what you expect.

It is difficult to be realistic while you are grieving, but it is also an important strategy for health and well-being. Plan ahead so that you are not overwhelmed by responsibilities at the last moment. When you are grieving, it is difficult to concentrate, so make lists. Prioritize things. Decide what is important to you this holiday season and scratch the rest off

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Suicide in Film

Susan Celentano, MFT
Santa Clarita, CA

This is the second part in a series of articles on the use of film to facilitate personal growth.

I might ask each of the survivors reading this, "Did you stop relating to your loved one after their death?" If your answer is 'yes,' you are probably in the minority. Much of our lives take place in the imagination, in psychological realms, apart from the "real" world, and it is in these psychological realms that much of our healing takes place. Films offer us an opportunity to use our imagination, our intuition and our abilities to reason and to empathize, to process our loss and to give greater meaning to our lives. We can live a restricted life after our loss, with limited psychological mobility. We can try to

The Suicide Prevention Center's Alive and Running Annual 5K/10K Walk/Run



Mark Vierra, wearing a t-shirt tribute to his wife, Laura, and friend, Eric, reflects on one of the quilts displayed at this year's Alive & Running 5K/10K Walk/Run. See page five.

squeeze the tragedy into our already existing ideas about the world, thus suffocating our opportunity for growth. Or we can develop new ideas—ideas that challenge who we were and who we thought we would be, and who our loved ones were and who we thought they would be. Such ideas hurt when we first try them on. They're uncomfortable and awkward and we want to shuck them off.

When you watch a movie therapeutically, it may hurt, because you are opening your mind to new ideas and challenging rigid belief systems. This is one way to grow. This is one way to find a changed place for our loved ones in our

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SAS exists to help people resolve their grief and pain in their own personal way, and to help them move forward in their lives, positively and productively.

The SAS Coordinator's Column



Carole Chasin, M.A., M.F.T.

The holidays can certainly be a time filled with emotions. Feelings such as sadness, regrets, anger, confusion or isolation are common during this time. Our 8-week support groups, monthly drop-in groups, Telephone Support Counselors and even the SAS potlucks can be helpful by connecting with people who can provide supportive understanding and caring. Our Holiday Potluck, held Saturday, December 6, was such an evening for those in attendance. The theme for the event was "Art & Healing" with an exhibit and discussion by survivor artists on using art as an addi-

tional means for grieving and healing following the loss of a loved one.

This March we will be holding our annual training for survivors interested in volunteering as co-leaders for the eight-week support groups and/or Telephone Support Counselors. The date for the training will be established soon. Please contact me to enroll or to talk about your interests by calling (310) 751-5370. Not only could you be of tremendous help to other survivors, but also, these experiences can provide opportunities for your own continued healing.

Wishing everyone a very Peaceful and Healthy New Year.

Carole ♡

Suicide in Film *continued from page one*

continuing lives and this is how we honor their memory. Of course, we each walk our own unique path through grief, finding solace and opportunities for growth in different places. One insightful survivor compared reading books that involve a suicide, which she can do, to watching movies that involve a suicide, which she cannot do. She writes that in books, "it's like hearing on the news of a car crash, but in movies it's too real; I feel like I am IN the car as it goes over the cliff."

As a survivor, you probably have a pretty good idea of whether or not viewing a suicide-related film would be helpful to you or if it would re-traumatize you. You can use this self-knowledge to decide if viewing movies therapeutically is for you.

The movies outlined in this article illustrate many facets of the phenomenon of suicide. As you watch them, you may want to consider the following questions and issues: with whom do you identify or connect with emotionally, what offends or makes you angry, are there new ways of looking at things or resolving problems, what emotions are triggered, and is there anything of value for you to take on your healing journey.

In the 1998 movie, *What Dreams May Come*, everything is vivid, from the images of heaven and hell to the strong emotions, both positive and negative, it elicits in viewers. This movie speaks to many survivor issues, but you must be willing to loosen your grip on rigid belief systems. The movie

relies on allegory and symbolism to illustrate the power of guilt and unfinished business and the corresponding tasks of renewal and forgiveness. The beauty is as breathtaking as the darkness is unsettling. There is a suicide in this movie, but you will not witness it. You will however, hear several direct

statements about what happens to "suicides" after death, and view related disturbing images. They will cause you to shudder and wince. If you focus on them, if you stay stuck there, you'll miss the real message of the movie, which is not punishment, but redemption.

Harold and Maude (1972) is described as a "dark comedy." It is ironic, irreverent, crass, and absurd, yet

somehow it feels like sweet salve on my restless soul. It is a celebration of life against the backdrop of death. You will witness numerous "staged" suicides in this movie, by the Harold character. The images are no less disturbing for their theatrics and will almost certainly be traumatic for survivors. This movie will stimulate your thoughts about suicide, end of life decisions, and individual responsibility and choice.

Silence of the Heart (1984) was the first "suicide" movie I saw after my partner died. As a new survivor, I was cocooned in a miasma of misery and sorrow. One afternoon I crawled into bed after returning from my SAS support group, as had become my pattern. Robotically, I turned on the television and saw Mariette Hartley portraying a mother whose teenage

continued on next page

Although they may be thematic, with metaphorical significance, the suicides or attempted suicides in the following movies are portrayed in a sudden, shocking and/or graphic manner, and may be particularly traumatic for the survivor to witness:

- *The Shawshank Redemption*
- *Monster's Ball*
- *A Few Good Men*
- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- *The Virgin Suicides*
- *Girl, Interrupted*
- *Mixed Nuts*
- *Scent of a Woman*
- *Pet Sematary*
- *Primary Colors*
- *Full Metal Jacket*

Suicide in Film *continued from previous page*

son had committed suicide. The movie depicted a family torn apart by suicide and their attempts to make sense of the tragedy. I immediately connected with the anguished expressions on Mariette's character's face—the absolute horror, the raw, desperate, sorrowful face of suicide grief. My anguish blended with hers, as I followed her from the initial shock to the place where healing can begin. Therein lies hope for the new survivor.

Housekeeping (1987) is the story of two young girls who struggle to find their place in the world—a place to belong—after their mother dies by suicide. One of the girls narrates the story, referring to herself and her sister as “the marooned survivors of some wreck.” This is a gentle movie. The images are soft and plaintive, not jarring, as in some of the other selections. The story also addresses the issues of social stigma, shame and mental illness.

Night Mother (1986) gives you a glimpse into one suicidal mind. A woman has made a decision to end her life and attempts to explain her reasoning to her mother. The exchange between the two women is provocative, as the mother makes increasingly desperate efforts to convince her daughter that her life is worth living and the daughter counters with the facts of her lifelong struggle with depression. You hear a gunshot in this movie, but you do not witness a suicide.

These movies, and so many others like them, challenge us. They prod us and sometimes jar us out of stagnation and emotional rigidity. There is a need, almost a desperation, after a loved one dies by suicide to categorize and label, to put the suicide in its place as this or that. The problem is, suicide is not this or that. It is this AND that, and then some. Suicide is a multi-faceted, complex phenomenon, with multi-faceted, complex implications for the victim and the survivor.

The portrayal of suicide in film forces this issue. Suicide is not one dimensional, nor were our loved ones. Does Maude kill herself for the same reason as the Nicole Kidman character in *The Hours*? Does Harold court suicide for the same reason as the Al Pacino character in *Scent of a Woman*?

Considering such questions can help us to understand our own loved ones, perhaps to recognize their pain or understand their reasoning and to accept and forgive, to find some peace in our hearts. Movies do not hold the answers to our loved ones' suicides. Those answers do not exist. But they can help us on our journey by providing models of strength and hope and insights on how to navigate the rocky terrain and get to the other side of grief, where there's warmth and light, and where our loved ones continue to occupy a space in our lives. ♡

Anne Gibson-Lott contributed the quote used on page two of this article.

The Gift

*A gift, I'm told, you've left behind,
That I must seek and find;
But pain too deep, and missing you
Have blocked my open mind.*

—Iris Bolton, from “The Suicide of My Son,” ©1977

The idea of any gifts arising from our loved one's suicide may have seemed inconceivable at first, but with time, they are revealed. Later in Iris's poem, we discover that the music her son composed became her gift. Lois Bloom's son, Sammy, died by suicide 12 days before Christmas, 1982. Lois shares her story in the following holiday feature.

Our first Christmas without Sammy (our 23 year-old-son) was a total disaster, even though everyone in the family did all they could to make it tolerable. Of course we knew it would be hard but we hadn't a clue as to just how hard.

On December 13, 1982 Sammy died by suicide and was cremated on the 17th (my birthday), his memorial service was on the 18th and seven days later was Christmas. Some of our family members who came for Sammy's Memorial Service planned to stay with us through the holidays: our two daughters Lisa (21) and Suzanne (22), Bart (Suz's husband), my mother and sister Shirlee, both from Pennsylvania.

by **LOIS BLOOM**

Several days before Christmas, our girls decorated the tree, wrapped the presents we had purchased days before Sammy's suicide, put them under the tree and hung our stockings. We decided to eat out on Christmas Day, although none of us had the wherewithal to think where!

The day before Christmas, my mother got very sick. She had a serious heart condition and was terribly upset about her grandson's suicide. My sister and I took her to my doctor. He said Mother was critically ill; she had a bad case of ophthalmic shingles. He told us he would make arrangements for her to go directly to the hospital. But Mother wanted to return home and go to her hospital. She asked the doctor if that was okay. He reluctantly agreed but cautioned us to waste no time. We made emergency plans for my mother and sister to fly home to Philadelphia early Christmas Day. Upon arrival she would go directly to her hospital.

Early Christmas morning we drove them to the airport. When Mother said goodbye she put my face between her hands, looked into my eyes, held back her tears and said, “Lois, be brave and hold onto hope!” Watching her wearily walk on to the plane holding my sister's hand, I could barely stand to see her leave. I had thoughts of never seeing her

continued on next page

The Gift *continued from previous page*

again. Mother was always my mentor, a very special, brave woman who had a difficult life yet always found good in all things. Tears poured from my eyes.

We searched for a restaurant on the way home, although none of us felt hungry. We found none were open and went home. There is no way to describe the desolation we all felt. Later that week when I packed our treasured Christmas ornaments and stockings away, I decided to never get them out again. I never have.

My unhappiness during the Christmas season did not change as the years went by. Each year I went through the motions, bought presents, etc., but I couldn't shake the sadness I felt. It was difficult for the family and I knew I let them down, but I didn't know how to change my feelings.

Some years later, a week before Christmas my daughter Lisa called and said, "Hi mom, guess what? Matthew (my 4-year-old grandson) has a great idea, he wants all of us to come and spend Christmas at your house. We'll be there the day before; we can go to the early church service and when we come home the three boys (Matthew, 4, David, 2, and Nicholas, 3) can hang their stockings on the fireplace where we used to hang ours, and before they go to bed Dad can tell the boys the story of Jesus' birth and you can read them *The Night before Christmas* like you did to us! Isn't that great? Won't we have fun?" An hour or so later my daughter Suzanne called and asked if Lisa had called to tell me the good news about everyone coming home for Christmas. I told her she had and Suzanne said, "Isn't great? We'll have such a good time being all together in the house we grew up in!"

No, no! I wanted to scream into the phone. *It isn't great!* I didn't want everyone to come home where the responsibility was up to me for my three grandsons to have a fun-filled Christmas. I didn't understand how Suzanne and Lisa could do this to me when they knew how sad Christmas was for me without Sammy. I was stunned for two days! The third day I realized I had no choice and I had to think about what to do about Christmas. It was only a few days away.

I'd always prided myself on my creative mind, and while making a list of ideas, it came to me that since all three boys loved toy trains, why not make it an "All Train Christmas"!

That very day during my lunch hour and after work I bought all kinds of train things—an electric Christmas train for around the tree, train ornaments, train hats, scarves, whistles, pajamas, shirts, toys, books—everything I could find. I planned a train menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner with train decorations.

It wasn't long before I realized that I was so involved in planning something for the boys that my sadness left me.

I also decided that during our Christmas dinner I'd ask all

New Lifekeepers Memory Quilt in Progress

We are close to completing another Lifekeepers Memory Quilt. If you have contributed a fee for a quilt square and have not returned your completed square, please send it soon to the address below, as we only need a few more to complete our next quilt.

We want the world to know our loved ones lived and deserve to be remembered. All 50 states have come together in this joint effort to educate the world for the need to reduce the incidence of suicide. The two existing quilts have been displayed at national meetings, and we are currently putting together a third. A \$20 fee covers the cost of material, labor and postage necessary to create your visual tribute.

Yes, I want to create a quilt square to honor:

Send the material and instructions to me:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

- Enclosed is my \$20 check or money order made out to Mary Halligan to cover the cost of material, labor and postage.

Mail to:

Mary Halligan, 21422 Grant Ave., Torrance, CA 90503
or call Mary at 310-316-4392 for information.

the adults to share a memory about Sammy. When some of us told the boys about Sammy's mischievous pranks they giggled and we all smiled remembering fond memories.

Later, I asked Lisa if Matthew had really come up with the idea and if she and Suzanne had talked about how it might change my feelings about Christmas. All Lisa and Suzanne would say was, "It was Matthew's idea Mom!" But I could tell by looking into their smiling eyes that they had been scheming.

It seems like such a simple thing now when I think about what I learned. I have always known that God's gift to us was the Christ child and Christmas is about giving to others cheerfully. But, somehow I got stuck in my grief big time.

I'd like to thank all of my family—most especially my grandson, Matthew, and my daughters, Suzanne and Lisa for their priceless gift of returning joy to me at Christmastime. What a gift! 🍀

Thank you so much, Lois, for sharing this transformational holiday story!

In many cultures, the holiday season is a family gathering—so be especially kind to yourself and avoid going anywhere that is going to cause you more pain. Remind yourself that your needs and feelings come first. You may want to spend a quiet time at home, instead of going places that will cause you more pain or tears. (Bereaved Families of Ontario)

Alive & Running 5K/10K Walk/Run

September 21, 2003



Team OB MAVEN raised a total of \$3,540 in memory of Dr. Louis Smith who died by suicide on April 6, 2003. From left to right: Mike Waxberg, Carrie Waxberg, Linda Smith, Jackie Smith, Geoff Tipper, Ben Roman, Sue Smith, Lorien Cleavinger, Phil Tipper.



Duran Waddell and his son, Desmond, clap at the finish line for Daria Brown, #73. It was also Daria's 25th birthday.



Andi Madden, Mark Vierra, Bobbie Mathers, Anne Langdon (and Tigger, too).



Jani Kleinbard and Jayden walked in memory of friend Matt Muller.

A total of 708 people contributed \$46,212.00 for the Suicide Prevention Center. Thank you to all who helped make Alive & Running a success in 2003.

Dealing with Grief and Bereavement During the Holidays

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the list this year. You can always add things back in the years to come.

Simplify your celebration. "Those people who find the most pleasure in Christmas are the ones who have taken control of the celebration and shaped it to conform to their own wishes and values." Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli, *Unplug the Christmas Machine*.

Listen to your heart and acknowledge your limits. Spend some quiet time alone, before the holiday rush, listening to your heart. Become aware of your needs and express them to family members and friends with whom you plan to spend the holidays. Encourage others to share their feelings, too, so that everyone affected by the death of your loved one has an opportunity to express his or her wishes about the holiday plans. Accept invitations and take on obligations only as you have the energy and the desire to do so. Make all your "yeses" tentative this year.

Do what you can this holiday season, and let that be sufficient. If you can't decorate the yard, decorate the house. If the house seems too big to tackle, decorate a room, a corner, a table. There is nothing wrong with simplicity.

When loss and grief overwhelm us at the holidays, we are sometimes tempted to scrap the whole thing, to do

absolutely nothing. But you can keep traditions alive in ways that make sense given the new reality of your life.

Rituals are important for many life events, death and loss are no different. Set up a separate activity prior to the holidays to acknowledge a loved one. Hoping to slip past such events without overwhelming reminders is not wise. A special time before the holiday can both honor the memory and mark the loss of your loved one. This frequently reduces the strain of the actual holiday.

If the family has lost a child, expect the holiday to be especially difficult. Some suggestions from bereaved parents include: hanging a child's stocking as usual and encouraging family members to write notes to put in it or buying a gift the child would have liked and donating it to a charitable organization.

Expect exhaustion and disruption. It is common to have difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite and blood pressure, tense muscles that are susceptible to strains, a weakened immune system. Be sure to tell your physician about your loss and any physical symptoms you have. During the holidays, avoid indulging in too many sweets or alcoholic drinks and remember to get plenty of rest.

Expect deep questions. Loss causes us to re-examine our beliefs about the universe, God, and how the world works. You may be drawn to people who have experienced a loss like yours and can understand some of your feelings and

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All of us at Didi Hirsch wish you a peaceful holiday season and hope you will consider making a year-end tax-deductible contribution using the enclosed envelope. Any donation is appreciated—Thank you!



Contributions 9/1/2003 – 10/31/2003: *A million thanks for your generosity!*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Chuck Anderson from Linda Anderson
James Bagby, Jr. from Kita & Peter Curry
Robert Bagby from Kita & Peter Curry
Mary Kay Bergman from Dino Andrade
Sammy Bloom from Lois & Sam Bloom; Suzanne, Bart & Nicholas Edises; Judy & Michael Moorhead; Lisa, Don, Matthew & David Williams
J. Phineas Cabrera from Stacie Krajchir, Pam Aronow
Linda Anne Claire from Mark Claire
Sean Collins from Lisa Collins
Danelle Cox from Kita & Peter Curry
Robert M. Curry from Kita & Peter Curry
Doreen from Marty Barlow
Jeffrey Allen Gutin from Nina Gutin, Ph.D.
Deborah Holland from Thomas Holland
Marty Jaconi from Vera Jashni
Peter Jones from Kita & Peter Curry
Stephen Lazarus from Barbara Lazarus, Ph.D.
Stephen Lelewer from Stan Lelewer
Patrick Laden from Marilyn Laden
Stephen Leroy from Gloria Leroy

Rob Wesley Littlejohn from Donna Littlejohn, Mary H. Milefchik
Tanya Madden from Andrea Madden
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Matthew John Muller from Christine Devine
Donna Neil from Terry Neil
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Nancie van Agglen from Elizabeth Bersin
Laura Vierra from Mark Vierra
Matt Werber from Kathy Werber
Diane Whittenberger from Laurie Rasmussen

FRIENDS (FROM THE SPC BANNER):

Bob and Elaine Bramen, Bob Brigham,

Dee Dee Cox, Kita and Peter Curry, Auntie Barb, Roy & Kathleen Beals, Thomas Holland, Michaela Hughes, Vera Jashni, Mary Lelewer, Stan Lelewer, Cindy Loeb, Howard Loeb, Susan Loeb, Lizzy Loeb, Lorraine & Joe Lyou, Duane McWaine, M.D., Jane Martin, Jack Maxwell, Dale K. Rose, Law Offices of Andrew Rubin, Judy & Allan Sher, Ruthie Smoot, Bea Stern, Angela Whited, Michael Wierwille, Cheri Renfroe Yousem

A total of 743 people contributed donations to Alive and Running this year!

Dealing . . . During the Holidays

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 questions. This is one reason many people, in early grief, find comfort in bereavement support groups.

Take heart. Right now, you may feel like scattered pieces of a broken puzzle. Honor that feeling, but also take comfort in knowing that the pieces of the puzzle can be reshuffled, rearranged, and pieced together to form a new picture. As you learn to create a new reality for yourself, temper your expectations with compassion and gentleness. You will heal, but only as you allow yourself to experience the full range of emotion on your journey through grief.

May love be what you remember the most. ♡

Whitney R. Bischoff, DrPH, RN, GVH Auxiliary.

Taken from the following sources:

Engelhart, L. (1989). Feeling depressed at Christmastime. *CareNotes*.
 Sims, D.D. (1996). Getting through the holidays when you've lost a loved one. *CareNotes*.
 Talbot, K. (2000). What everyone should know about the first year of grief. *CareNotes*.
 Story courtesy of *The Seguin Gazette-Enterprise*.
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Survivors After Suicide is privately funded by generous contributions from individual donors, proceeds from the Alive and Running 5K/10K Walk/Run, and grants from private foundations and corporations such as the J.M. Long Foundation, Million Dollar Round Table Foundation, and TRW ECHO.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2003

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting

Light a candle for all children who have died.
 7 p.m. around the globe.
 See www.compassionatefriends.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2004

Love and Shrimp AFSP Benefit

This special performance of Mariette Hartley's play will take place at the University of Judaism. A reception will

follow. Contact Susan Celentano at 1.661.260.3119 for performance time and ticket information.

APRIL 14-17, 2004

American Association of Suicidology 37th Annual Conference

See www.suicidology.org or call 1.202.237.2280.

APRIL 17, 2004

American Association of Suicidology 16th Annual Healing Conference

See www.suicidology.org or call 1.202.237.2280.

The Suicide Prevention Center's Minority Outreach Program

In its ongoing efforts to educate the community about warning signs, risk factors and interventions to prevent suicide, the Suicide Prevention Center's Minority Outreach Program, funded by The California Endowment, provided presentations to the following schools and agencies from **May through October** of this year:*

	<i>participants</i>		<i>participants</i>		
5/3	Dorothy Kirby Center	15	7/24	Assistance League of Southern California	16
5/3	Dorothy Kirby Center	16	7/26	Maranatha Community Church	21
5/5	Hathaway Children and Family Services	20	8/2	Community Helpline	28
5/7	Valley Care Glendale Health Center	12	8/21	Day One	9
5/7	Valley Care Glendale Health Center	9	8/25	Drew Middle School	188
5/10	Dorothy Kirby Center	16	9/2	Los Angeles Valley College	51
5/12	Latino Psychological Services - CalWorks Office	5	9/3	Lennox Middle School	43
5/12	DH Via Avanta	17	9/8	HIV Epidemiology	15
5/13	Western Youth Services - North Region	25	9/17	Latino Psychological Services	14
5/18	Tarzana Treatment Center	25	9/17	Crenshaw Christian Center	33
5/19	MaClay Primary Center	1	9/17	Latino Psychological Services	6
5/19	MaClay Middle School	1	9/22	Community Counseling Service	41
5/19	Pacoima Community Youth Center	1	9/24	Info Line	30
5/19	Montague Charter Academy Elementary	1	9/24	Info Line	8
5/19	Family Care Healthy Kids	2	10/2	Antioch University	25
5/19	Pacoima Elementary	1	10/24	Children's Homes of Southern California	3
5/19	Pacoima Elementary Parent Center	1	10/24	Children's Homes of Southern California	14
5/19	Pacoima Elementary Parent Outreach Connections	1			
5/19	Parent Outreach Connections	1			
5/21	Discovery Charter Preparatory School	103			
5/21	San Fernando Health Center - Valley Care	14			
5/22	Firestone Probation Department	22			
5/31	Dorothy Kirby Center	16			
6/2	McCambridge Park Ombudsman Program	15			
6/4	Covenant House	31			
6/4	San Fernando Health Center - Valley Care	15			
6/5	Birmingham High School	127			
6/5	Walnut Valley High	22			
6/7	Dorothy Kirby Center	13			
6/9	Birmingham High School	49			
6/9	University High School	82			
6/10	Birmingham High School	164			
6/11	Birmingham High School	32			
6/21	Norwalk Presbyterian Church	45			
6/23	South Hills High School	32			
6/24	Masada Homes	35			
6/27	Masada Homes	21			
6/27	Masada Homes	4			
7/1	Peninsula High School	111			
7/2	Masada Homes	16			
7/13	Centenary United Methodist Church	23			
7/13	Centenary United Methodist Church	37			
7/15	Assistance League of Southern California	11			
7/16	Assistance League of Southern California	8			
7/24	Open Paths	0			

* A total of 1,763 people attended these presentations.

Plan ahead for family gatherings and decide which traditions you wish to continue and which you wish to let go. Telling others you may change your plans or leave gatherings early can help to take the pressure off as well.
(Bereaved Families of Ontario)

SYMPTOMS OF MAJOR DEPRESSION

Persistently sad mood or absence of emotions.
 Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, guilt, pessimism or worthlessness.
 Substance abuse.
 Fatigue or loss of interest in ordinary activities.
 Disturbance in eating and sleeping patterns.
 Irritability, increased crying; anxiety and panic attacks.
 Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
 Thoughts of suicide; suicide plans or attempts.
 Persistent physical symptoms or pains that do not respond to treatment.

DANGER SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Talking about suicide.
 Statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness.
 Preoccupation with death. Suddenly happier, calmer.
 Loss of interest in things one cares about.
 Unusual visiting or calling people one cares about.
 Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order.
 Giving things away.

A suicidal person urgently needs to see a doctor or psychiatrist.

REPRINT POLICY

You are welcome to reprint material from our newsletter if you are a nonprofit support organization that produces periodicals. We do require the item include the author's name and title and the following:

"Reprinted with permission from the Survivors After Suicide Newsletter, a Program of the Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center: Suicide Prevention Center, 4760 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230"

Also include the issue date and year the article appeared. Kindly send us a copy of any reprints for our authors to the attention of Deborah Pikul, Editor. Thank you.

SAS Monthly Meetings

Everyone who has completed an eight-week Survivors After Suicide Support Group is invited to attend monthly meetings at any of the locations listed below. There is no charge.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Sherman Oaks Hospital, 4929 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks. Meetings are held in the doctor's dining room on the 1st floor.

2nd Saturday 11:30 am – 1:00 pm.

Meeting dates: **Dec 13 Jan 10 Feb 14 Mar 13**

SOUTH BAY: Must call ahead, 310.751.5370.

Little Company of Mary Hospital, Center for Health Education Building, Earl Street, Torrance. Please check the bulletin board inside door for meeting room. **3rd Monday 7:30 – 9:00 pm.**

Meeting dates: **Dec 15 Jan 19 Feb 16 Mar 15**

WEST L.A.

Didi Hirsch Culver/Palms Center, 11133 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 1 block east of Sepulveda on the north side of the street. The parking lot is in the building. Drive up to the gate and it will open outward.

3rd Wednesday 7:00 – 8:30 pm.

Meeting dates: **Dec 17 Jan 21 Feb 18 Mar 17**

*View this newsletter online at www.suicidepreventioncenter.org.
Click on Bereavement.*

SURVIVORS AFTER SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

A quarterly publication of Survivors after Suicide (a support group for those who have lost a loved one to suicide), a program of the **Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health: Suicide Prevention Center**
4760 S. Sepulveda Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 751-5324

SAS Program Number:
(310) 751-5370

Crisis Line Number:
(310) 391-1253

Editor: Deborah Pikul
(sasnews@earthlink.net)

Editorial Board: Lois Bloom;
Samuel C. Bloom; Carole Chasin, MA,MFT; David Davis;
Norman Farberow, Ph.D.;
Jay Nagdimon, Ph.D. Special thanks to Carole Chasin for proofreading, and to all others who have assisted in producing the SAS Newsletter.

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