



# SURVIVORS

**after suicide** A Program of Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2005 • VOLUME 18, NO. 1 • PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

## Surviving the Holidays

### Thoughts on Coping

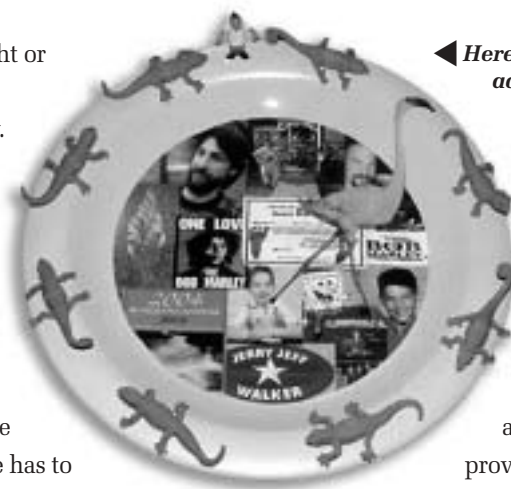
There is no right or wrong way to handle the day. Some may wish to follow family

traditions, while others may choose to change.

Focus your celebrations on winter: go to a mountain lodge, go sledding or skiing, or just take a walk in the woods. Take time to enjoy what nature has to offer during this season.

Include the deceased in your conversations and celebrations. Hang a stocking for your loved one in which people can put notes with their thoughts or feelings. Look at photographs. Once others realize that you are comfortable talking about your loved one, they can relate stories that will add to your pleasant memories. Keep in mind the feelings of your children or family members. Try to make the holiday season as joyous as possible for them.

Plan to be with the people YOU enjoy.



◀ **Here's an idea to let others know it's okay to acknowledge loved ones not present at the holiday dinner:** Rick Mogil created this "spirit plate" by pasting pictures of his brother Ed alongside images and objects Ed loved. The presence of a spirit plate provides and opportunity for us and others to share stories of those we miss.

Do something for others: volunteer at a soup kitchen, visit the lonely and shut-ins, ask someone who is alone to share the day with your family, provide help for a needy family, volunteer at the airport to pour coffee for stranded travelers, or offer to volunteer in a hospital on the holiday. If your city has a Ronald McDonald House, see if you can help make their holiday happier.

Don't be afraid to express your feelings. Allow people to comfort you. They need to feel they are helping in some way.

Remember, anticipation of any holiday is so much worse than the actual holiday. Donate a gift or money in your loved one's name.

Try to get enough rest.

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## What Can I Do Now?

Rick Mogil  
Studio City, CA

*Thirty thousand!*

- A great number if it were lottery winnings.
- Pretty good mileage on a three-year-old car.
- Incredibly sad number when it

relates to suicides per year (this has been the standard figure used for the past 20 years. Some sources say the actual count could be as high as 100,000).

Then there are the figures ancillary to suicide.

A suicide directly affects any or all of the following: partner or spouse, parents, children, siblings and friends. That's 200,000 to half a million people who become Survivors After Suicide.

## SAVE THE DATE

### Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2004 AT 7PM

*Light a candle for all children who have died.*

What is survival after suicide, really?

Life goes on. You'll get over it. It's God's will. You will find someone else. He's at peace. She's better off. You still have your other children...

**BULL**—! Or as fellow survivor Mark once said, "It sucks!"

Becoming a survivor starts with

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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.**



Tom Rankin, J.D., M.A.

## Tom's Column

Every survivor who is placed in our groups speaks to me on the telephone first, and those conversations are deeply moving. One survivor convinced her fiancé to get back into the car, only to watch him suddenly change his mind and leap off a bridge to his death. Another survivor received a call from her aunt informing her that her father had assisted her mother's suicide. A third survivor sobbed quietly as she explained that there had been no warning signs whatsoever when her son killed himself, and she still had no idea why he died.

I am privileged to hear survivors tell their stories. I have also been privileged to observe and participate in two eight-week SAS groups, to watch the slow process of healing as it happens through conversation with other survivors. The initial narrative from each survivor is raw, often disjointed, as people struggle to communicate some of the most difficult experiences of their lives. There is awkwardness and intimacy in these first moments. Inevitably several survivors decide that they are not ready for this type of sharing,

and drop out of the group. The remaining courageous souls learn the specifics of each other's pain, the unanswerable questions, the sleepless nights, the fathomless depths of depression or intense bursts of anger.

By the fifth or sixth session of the group, something mysterious happens. Survivors begin to ask each other about other aspects of their lives than their loss. People start to crack jokes. What started as shared devastation transforms into pleasure in each other's company. Survivors begin to have insight into how much pain their loved one was in, to think about forgiveness or acceptance. Unanswered questions remain, but somehow it is less difficult in the togetherness of the group.

I have read many theoretical explanations of how the group process helps heal survivors, but it is somehow different to watch it unfold in reality. At this point, I am simply grateful to all the volunteers, therapists, and survivors who come together to make this miracle of healing possible.

Tom ❖

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Tom Rankin serves as Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Services Coordinator. He can be reached at 310.751.5370.



### Benefit the Suicide Prevention Center When You Shop Online for the Holidays— At No Extra Cost to You

Up to 15% of your purchase benefits the SPC

Barnes & Noble.com Bookstore • A&E Television Networks  
American Express • AVON • DiscoveryStore  
DisneyStore.com • PETsMART.com • The Animal Rescue Site Store  
Gateway • Dell Home Systems • goodguys.com • Elisabeth by Liz  
Claiborne • adidas America • gap.com • Hallmark.com • Hickory  
Farms • jcrew.com • JCPenney • Lancome • Linens-n-Things  
Netflix • NORDSTROM.com • oldnavy.com • L.L. Bean  
The Rainforest Site Store • Brookstone • Office Depot, Inc.  
123inkjets.com • sharperimage.com • Sears Home Center  
Lillian Vernon Online • Wreaths & Flowers • Vermont Teddy Bear  
RedEnvelope • Sur La Table • Utne Reader • The Rainforest Site  
Store • eHealthInsurance • Tom's of Maine • The Breast Cancer  
Site Store • Office Depot, Inc. • Lands' End • ebay • Sterling Planet  
GoTo.com • priceline.com • Teva • Lillian Vernon Online • Orvis  
Sterling Planet • The Child Health Site Store • CWD Kids  
UncommonGoods • Pink Ribbon Jewelry • Yankee Candle

And more...

[www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org)  
click on "to help SPC," then "Charitable Shopping"

## What Can I Do Now? continued from page 1

knowledge of the suicide. For some, it is "getting the news," while for others it is the devastating discovery of the body. Initially there is a lot of *Oh My God!*, *How can this be?*, *Why, why, why?*, *Not my baby!*, *Noooo!*, and then the shock sets in. We become numb, unfocused, uncaring about life around us. We fight despair, loneliness and depression. We lose our appetites and desires. There is no joy in our lives. There is nothing to look forward to. There is only emptiness.

We dwell on the *What did I do wrong* or the *I should have done more* and lose sight of *What can I do now?*

The *Now* is most important. It is that which will give us the direction for the rest of our lives. It will give a better understanding of our relationship with our loved one who has died by suicide. It will give us a chance to heal.

It is difficult to arrive at *Now*. It is an arduous journey through grief, depression and dejection. It is a singular journey of searching for answers, seeking guidance and consolation. It can be spiritual and emotional, or scientific and logical. *Now* can be achieved early in the weeks and months following the suicide or it can take years.

My own journey began within days of my brother Ed's suicide. My wonderful, loving cousin, Freya, brought me

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## What Can I Do Now? continued from page 2

information about Al-Anon. It sat for weeks next to my reading chair, untouched while I watched family movies of us all growing up, or sobbing uncontrollably while viewing the memorial slide show from Ed's funeral. I eventually realized that I could not deal with this on my own and sought a referral to a grief counselor. Then I noticed the Al-Anon brochure and books, and after a brief scanning of the information, I decided to attend a meeting.

While my sessions with the counselor were clinical and logical, my first Al-Anon meeting was very emotional. Several people came up to me after the meeting to share their losses to suicide and one in particular spoke to me about something called SAS, Survivors After Suicide.

During the four or five months it took to get into an eight week session, I continued to attend Al-Anon meetings. Once my eight week session began, I found that Al-Anon had served its purpose by bringing me to SAS.

At the end of the eight weeks, with the support of my wife Maggie and the encouragement of Susan Celentano, I volunteered to become a co-facilitator.

This is my *Now*. This is giving direction and meaning to my life. This is my healing.

I know what *Now* is. It is talking freely about your loved one's suicide. It is encouraging others to openly acknowledge their loss. It is reaching out to offer guidance, consolation and support. It is getting involved, speaking out and *doing* something with your knowledge.

I am sharing my experiences, listening to others and hope that my compassion for and love of my fellow survivors will help them on their journey to healing and *Now*. ♡

*Editor's note: I would like to thank Rick for all of the original and heartfelt articles he has contributed to this newsletter in the past year. The therapeutic value of his writing is his and ours to share as his stories have chronicled his healing each quarter. Rick also provided the photo of the "spirit plate" seen on page one. As Rick continues to heal, he is becoming a superb healer.*

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## Suicide and Survivor Stats

Rick Mogil began his page one article with the number 30,000, the average number of people who kill themselves each year in the United States. Franklin Cook, in his speech at the SPAN-USA conference in September, helped the audience visualize this number: 30,000 is approximately equal to TEN 9/11s per year.

According to the AAS website ([www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)), there are an average of six survivors per suicide, or 480 new survivors each day. Over the last 25 years, 738,383 people have died by suicide, leaving 4,430,298 to mourn them. It is estimated that one out of every 62 Americans is a survivor.

## 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 grief may have seemed inconceivable at first, but with time, our gifts are revealed. Later in Iris's poem, we discover that the music her son composed became her gift. Debbie Pikul's brother Jeff killed himself in November of 1990, and her brother Chris killed himself in 1998. She shares the gift of her parents' renewed joy:

**M**y mother's high school class of '61 planned their first reunion over the summer. Although my folks attended different high schools, my dad hung around with kids from my mother's school, so both of my parents would be seeing old friends again.

My dad and the guys used to play PG in the empty lot near his apartment (PG, short for PGB, is a baseball-like game played with a miniature Wiffle ball). My dad played catcher while Billy pitched, and one day a batter drove a soaring pop up between them. They both took off in the direction of the ball with their heads thrown back and their gloves stretched open. When my dad (who looked a lot like Dom DiMaggio) crashed into Billy, his mangled glasses sliced open Billy's nose.

After graduation, my mother and one of her best friends signed up to attend the same community college. Pat went on to finish a teaching degree, and my mother got married and soon became pregnant with me. Pat took a teaching position in Germany, and the girls lost touch.

Of the 41 people that graduated from my mother's high school, many attended the reunion with their spouses, including Pat and Billy. Both Pat and Billy had experienced the deaths of their children. Pat and my folks both had boys named Christopher who died at 22. Billy and my folks both had *two* sons who died tragically. And of all of those attending the reunion, these three couples had the most fun.

They knew of each other's losses, yet soon found themselves joking about the "good ole days" and the scar that will always remind Billy of the crash on the infield. The three couples danced all night, "doing crazy stuff—making fools of ourselves," my mother said. On the way home, she thought of all of her other classmates sitting and watching them have fun. *They must have thought we were just awful for enjoying ourselves when our kids are dead*, she said to herself. But she quickly dismissed the thought, for she has learned to enjoy the precious moments when they come. A stranger watching my folks and their friends might have envied their happiness, but that stranger couldn't know the price of that happiness and the scars they all carry on the inside. ♡

# Tips for Handling the Holidays

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## 1. Decide what you can handle comfortably and let family and friends know.

- Can I handle the responsibility of the family dinner, etc. or shall I ask someone else to do it?
- Do I want to talk about my loved one or not?
- Shall I stay here for the holidays or go to a completely different environment?

## 2. Make some changes if they feel comfortable for you.

- Open presents Christmas Eve instead of Christmas morning. Vary the timing of Channukah gift giving.
- Have dinner at a different time or place.
- Let the children take over decorating the house, the tree, baking and food preparation, etc.

## 3. Re-examine your priorities: greeting cards, holiday baking, decorating, putting up a tree, family dinner, etc.

- Do I really enjoy doing this?
- Is this a task that can be shared?

## 4. Consider doing something special for someone else.

- Donate a gift in the memory of your loved one.
- Donate money you would have spent on your loved one as a gift to charity.
- Adopt a needy family for the holidays.
- Invite a guest (foreign student, senior citizen) to share festivities.

## 5. Recognize your loved one's presence in the family.

- Burn a special candle to quietly include your loved one.
- Hang a stocking for your loved one in which people can put notes with their thoughts or feelings.

- Listen to music especially liked by the deceased.
- Look at photographs.

## 6. If you decide to do holiday shopping, make a list ahead of time and keep it handy for a good day, or shop through a catalog.

## 7. Observe the holidays in ways which are comfortable for you.

- There is no right or wrong way of handling holidays.
- Once you've decided how to observe the time, let others know.

## 8. Try to get enough rest—holidays can be emotionally and physically draining.

## 9. Allow yourself to express your feelings.

- Holidays often magnify feelings of loss. It is natural to feel sadness.
- Share concerns, apprehensions, feelings with a friend. The need for support is often greater during holidays.

## 10. Keep in mind that the experience of many bereaved persons is that they do come to enjoy the holidays again. There will be another holiday season to celebrate.

## 11. Don't be afraid to have fun.

- Laughter and joy are not disrespectful. Give yourself and your family members permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holidays. ♡

*This article and the article that appears on the top of page one were originally published in Bereavement & Loss Resources, a publication of Rivendell Resources and GriefNet. Rivendell Resources grants anyone the right to reprint this information without request for compensation so long as the copy is not used for profit and so long as this paragraph is reprinted in its entirety with any copied portion.*

## Christmas Blue

*My heart is so fragile, and I'm  
falling apart.*

*The thought of the holidays is  
breaking my heart.*

*There is no cheer to spread this year,  
I just want to run away and  
forget I'm here.*

*I feel guilty and sad and full of despair.  
I'm letting down everyone and  
it's just not fair.*

*Do you know the kind of pain that I feel?  
I can't do it this year; I just can't deal.*

*So let me do this in my own way,  
And then I'm sure that you will see  
That because love is there inside of me,  
I must endure what is meant to be.*

*Reprinted from Bereavement, Nov/Dec 1999*

*I pray every day, "God, show me  
the way.*

*When I feel alone at night,  
There's no one here to hold me tight.  
I need Your help to find the path  
that is right."*

*It's been over a year, and I still cry.  
Sometimes I don't even know why.  
The tears, the sorrow, the pain I feel  
My aching heart that will not heal.*

*I wonder if only there could be  
One more time for you and me.  
A time when God could share a place  
For us to meet, face to face.*

*One last time to say farewell,  
And know that you are safe and well.  
The comfort I would then feel  
Would ease my pain and help me heal.*

**Grieving is more about learning how to live with the silence and the emptiness, than trying to overcome it.**

*Reprinted from Suicide Bereavement Support, October 2002*

## LOIS BLOOM'S "MOURNING AFTER SUICIDE"

The new rewrite of this popular grief handbook is available now!

Call 800.537.3394 from  
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Eastern.  
Individual copies are \$3.00.

*If you require larger quantities:*

5-9	.....	\$2.75
10-24	.....	\$2.50
25-49	.....	\$2.25
50-99	.....	\$2.00
100-249	.....	\$1.75
250-499	.....	\$1.65
500+	.....	\$1.55

## Lifekeepers Memory Quilt

**We are starting another Lifekeepers Memory Quilt.** Like the four we have completed, this quilt will serve as a tangible message to educate our nation, our neighbors, and our legislators that we who survive want to help others find a way to live. Our quilts are displayed at national meetings, suicide-related conferences and other events. All 50 states have come together in this joint effort to educate the world about the need to reduce the incidence of suicide. You can share your pictures and sentiments by dedicating a square in the Lifekeepers Memory Quilt, offering the image of your loved one. A \$20 fee covers the cost of material, labor and postage necessary to create your visual tribute. You will receive a cotton square and instructions on how to proceed.

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

Send the material and instructions to me:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- 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.

## 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.**

## Suicide in the News

### ► President Bush Signs Youth Suicide Prevention Bill

The president has enacted the **Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act** (S. 2634), signing into law a bill that will authorize \$82 million over three years to provide state and local governments and not-for-profit organizations with grants needed to develop and expand youth suicide prevention and intervention programs. The bill will emphasize early screening programs that identify mental illness in children as young as sixth grade, and provide referrals for community-based treatment and training for child care professionals. The bill will also provide grants to colleges and universities to establish or enhance mental health programs and suicide prevention efforts.

S. 2634 authorizes \$60 million to be distributed through states and tribes and \$22 million for colleges and universities, but it still must be funded through the congressional appropriations process.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), along with other suicide prevention organizations like the Suicide Prevention Action Network, American Association of Suicidology and The Jed Foundation, played a role in the development of this legislation over the past year.

The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act is named for the son of Senator Gordon Smith. Garrett was 21 when he died by suicide in 2003. According to Jerry Reed, head of the Suicide Prevention Action Network, this is the first federal law specifically aimed at youth suicide prevention. *Reprinted from afsp.org and the Los Angeles Times, 10/22/04, p. A13.*

### ► Former President Clinton Affected By Suicides

Former President Bill Clinton spoke candidly about the severe depression and suicide of his childhood friend, Vince Foster, on Larry King Live this past summer. Depression, he said, "is a condition that has to be treated." In 1971, Clinton's roommate also killed himself. "Thirty three years ago and...every September I think about it all over again," he said. Clinton recommended William Styron's book, *Darkness Visible*, saying it helped him "more than anything" to understand depression.

### ► A Suicide Every 40 Seconds

According to Reuters, almost a million people kill themselves each year. Every 40 seconds, somewhere on the globe, someone is dying by suicide. *Reuters, 9/8/04.*

**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** 09/01/04 – 10/31/04: *A million thanks for your generosity!*

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF:**

**Bruce Smith** from Ann N. Smith  
**David Moss** from Los Angeles Bench and Bar Affiliates, Inc.; Judge and Mrs. Donald F. Pitts  
**Edouard Botwick** from Barbara Minkoff  
**Eric Spencer** from Bobbie Mathers  
**Jeffrey Kinney** from A.J. and Adeline Ochoa

**Jerry Ponce** from Michelle Ponce  
**John Winn** from Jacqueline and Joseph Leimbach  
**Judy Sohl** from Cynthia Sohl  
**Kimberly Pauli** from Jacqueline Rappaport  
**Sean Kowsky** from Ms. Kim Kowsky  
**Shari Jane Potter** from Chuck and Rissa Potter

**Will Richeson** from David and Margaret Mgrublian  
**Jay McCreary** from Faye and John McCreary  
**IN HONOR OF:**  
**Barbara Hornichter** from Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Rosin  
**Heidi Owen** from Dr. Harold Owen

*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 Chapman and Associates, Daniel Freeman Community Trust, and Northrop Grumman.*

**Calendar of Upcoming Events**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2004 AT 7PM**  
**The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting**

U.S. Senator Harry Reid has introduced Senate Resolution 436 to proclaim the second Sunday in December as National Children's Memorial Day to coincide with The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting. Please e-mail your senators requesting support of this important tribute to children gone too soon. See [www.compassionatefriends.com](http://www.compassionatefriends.com)

**FEBRUARY 11 - 12, 2005**  
**NOPCAS 7th Annual Conference**

The National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide's annual conference will be held in Minnesota. See [www.nopcas.com](http://www.nopcas.com)

**APRIL 13-16, 2005**  
**American Association of Suicidology 38th Annual Conference**

Omni Interlocken Resort, Denver/ Broomfield, Colorado. See [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

**JULY 16-17, 2005**  
**Out of the Darkness National Overnight Experience in Chicago**

AFSP designed this national walk event to help raise awareness about depression and suicide. Go to [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org) for online registration. To attend this event with others from Southern California, please contact Susan Celentano at 661.260.3119.

**OCTOBER 19-21, 2005**  
**Yellow Ribbon's National Conference**

Featuring Judy Collins, this event is for survivors of suicide attempts, their families and friends. See [www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org)

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

AFSP is proud to announce the creation of the first ever Survivor e-Network.

The goal of the e-Network is instant communication to the survivor community. Through the

e-Network, survivors can learn about new resources and initiatives and play a vital role in mobilizing support for research and education. Addressing the full range of topics of interest to survivors, including upcoming healing conferences and other events, research developments and advocacy opportunities, the e-Network will be a tool both for communication and for action. It will help create a sense of community and empower survivors who wish to become active in the work of suicide prevention.

**Survivor e-Network**

**@www.afsp.org**

JOIN TODAY. Just complete the information below and return to AFSP, 120 Wall Street, 22nd Floor, NY, NY 10005. Or send your information by email to: [enetwork@afsp.org](mailto:enetwork@afsp.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a survivor? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of the person/people you lost? \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship to them: \_\_\_\_\_

What was the date(s) of the suicide(s)? \_\_\_\_\_



# Important Phone Numbers and Resources

## HELP LINES

**Suicide Prevention Center Crisis Line:**  
Toll free in LA County: 1.877.727.4747

**Suicide Prevention Center Crisis Line:**  
Outside LA County: 1.310.391.1253

**Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center:**  
1.310.390.6612

**Trevor Helpline** (Suicide Hotline for gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning youth): 1.800.850.8078

**National Suicide Prevention Crisis Line:** 1.800.SUICIDE (800.784.2433), 24 hrs., connects with local certified help

## RESOURCES

**AAS** — American Association of Suicidology (professional training/education/research/prevent/survivors): 1.202.237.2280, [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

**AFSP** — American Foundation/Suicide Prevention (research & education): [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org), 1.888.333.2377

**Compassionate Friends/South Bay, LA:** 1.310.368.6845

**Compassionate Friends, Inc.** (parents grief): 1.630.990.0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) — chat room 10am-11:00 pm

**NAMI** — National Alliance for Mentally Ill: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)  
1.800.950.6264

**NAMI-California:** [namicalifornia.org](http://namicalifornia.org), 1.916.567.0163

**NOPCAS** — National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide, [www.nopcas.com](http://www.nopcas.com), 1.866.899.5317

**SPAN-USA** — Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network:  
[www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org), 1.202.449.3600

**SPAN-California:** [www.span-california.org](http://www.span-california.org), 1.760.753.4565

**SAVE** — Suicide Awareness/Voices of Education (depression and suicide information): [www.save.org](http://www.save.org), 952.946.7998

**Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Project, Light for Life International:** [www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org), 1.303.429.3530

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## The Latest Figures—Suicides in the U.S.

The National Center for Health Statistics posted the following summary of suicides for the year 2002 (the most recent data available) at [www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/suicide.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/suicide.htm):

### All suicides

Number of deaths: 31,655

Deaths per 100,000 population: 11.0

### Firearm suicides

Number of deaths: 17,108

Deaths per 100,000 population: 5.9

### Suffocation suicides

Number of deaths: 6,462

Deaths per 100,000 population: 2.2

### Poisoning suicides

Number of deaths: 5,489

Deaths per 100,000 population: 1.9

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*Please visit  
the site listed  
above for  
additional  
data.*

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## INTERNET SUPPORT

[www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org): OUR WEBSITE, Survivors After Suicide newsletter, current issue

[www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org): helplines, prevention information and resources for mental health, etc.

[www.span-california.org](http://www.span-california.org)

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org): to receive the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's online newsletter, go to [www.sprc.org/thespark](http://www.sprc.org/thespark)

[www.bereavementmag.com](http://www.bereavementmag.com): *Bereavement* magazine online

[health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SurvivorsAfterSuicide](http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SurvivorsAfterSuicide): created by a member of our survivor community, this group can be used to post photos and chat with other survivors

[www.friendsforsurvival.org](http://www.friendsforsurvival.org): Friends for Survival, Inc., Sacramento, CA

[www.1000deaths.com](http://www.1000deaths.com): SOLOS survivor support and suicide prevention

[www.groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/parentsofsuicides](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/parentsofsuicides): submit your email to join the mailing list

[www.parentsofsuicide.com](http://www.parentsofsuicide.com): support for parents of suicides

[www.fiercegoodbye.com](http://www.fiercegoodbye.com): based on the Hallmark documentary focusing on suicide survivors

[www.nopcas.com](http://www.nopcas.com): national organization for people of color against suicide

[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org): promotes tolerance for gay and questioning teenagers, aids in suicide prevention

[www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org): teen and youth suicide prevention

[www.twotoomany.com](http://www.twotoomany.com): SAS Editor's website, lost two brothers to suicide

[www.beforetheirtime.org](http://www.beforetheirtime.org): a musical resource to provide comfort to people after the death of someone close

[www.siblingsurvivors.com](http://www.siblingsurvivors.com): Michelle Linn-Gust's website

[www.survivorsofsuicide.com](http://www.survivorsofsuicide.com): a website dedicated to those who have lost a loved one to suicide

[www.nameastar.net](http://www.nameastar.net): Name a Star's Memorial Star™ can be given as a memorial in remembrance of a loved one

[www.nostigma.org](http://www.nostigma.org): a public service campaign to educate the public about mental health issues and eradicate the fear, shame and stigma commonly associated with mental illness

[www.suicidewall.com](http://www.suicidewall.com): honoring Vietnam Veterans

[www.heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.org](http://www.heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.org): a peer support group offering empathy, encouragement and direction following the suicide of a loved one

[www.friendsandfamiliesofsuicide.com](http://www.friendsandfamiliesofsuicide.com): an international site for support

[www.suicidememorialwall.com](http://www.suicidememorialwall.com): a tribute to lost loved ones

[www.suicidediscussionboard.com](http://www.suicidediscussionboard.com): open for the purpose of suicide awareness, support, and education

[www.suicidereferencelibrary.com](http://www.suicidereferencelibrary.com): provides helpful information to those who are involved in suicide awareness, grief support, and educational activities

[www.med.uio.no/iasp](http://www.med.uio.no/iasp): International Association for Suicide Prevention

[www.webhealing.com](http://www.webhealing.com): articles of interest

[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org): grief support; a system that can connect you with various resources

## 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 publication 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 4\*** **Jan 8** **Feb 12** **Mar 12**

*\*please note the schedule change*

## SOUTH BAY

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 20** **Jan 17** **Feb 21** **Mar 21**

## WEST LA

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 15** **Jan 19** **Feb 16** **Mar 16**

*View this newsletter online at [www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://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 **Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center** 4760 S. Sepulveda Blvd. Culver City, CA 90230 (310) 751-5324

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