17th Annual Arizona Survivors of Suicide Conference

Saturday, May 21, 2016

New Location: Desert Willow Conference Center
4340 E. Cotton Center Blvd. Phoenix (Tempe Border)
8:30am – 3:00pm
(Same great Continental Breakfast & Buffet Lunch will be served).

Our day will be focused on hope and healing, helping participants gain support and assistance in dealing with survivor grief.

Registration fees: $10/survivor rate
$25/professionals

To register, please visit www.empactsos.org and click on the link for Events.

For more information, please contact
Sandra.McNally@LaFrontera-EMPACT.org

NEW SOS Group Begins in March for the Gila River Indian Community:

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month
(1st meeting March 1st, 2016), 1pm-2:30pm
Where: District 6 Service Center Conference Room-Laveen
EMPACT-SPC Hosted the 10th Annual Jeremiah Memorial 5K Walk/Run to Support Survivors of Suicide

On Saturday, February 6th, EMPACT-SPC held its annual 5K Walk/Run to Support Survivors of Suicide, the 10th anniversary of this special event. Approximately 600 people were in attendance, including Survivors of Suicide, EMPACT-SPC staff, and community partners such as the Arizona Suicide Prevention Coalition, Cenpatico Behavioral Health, Crisis Response Network, the Arizona Department of Health Services, and Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care. Local businesses, such as Starbucks, Einstein Bagels, and Water Mill Express, donated food and beverages to help support EMPACT-SPC and this event.

To commemorate 10 years of hosting this day of hope and healing for Survivors of Suicide, Tempe Councilmember Kolby Granville presented a proclamation from Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell, proclaiming February 6, 2016 as “Jeremyah Memorial 5K Walk/Run to Support Survivors of Suicide Day”. In addition, as part of the City of Tempe Living Tree Memorial Program, EMPACT-SPC planted a tree in Kiwanis Park, in memory of those lost to suicide. A special tree dedication was part of this year’s Walk ceremony.

This annual event has been one way that survivors can honor their loved ones who have died by suicide, as well as a way EMPACT-SPC can raise community awareness about suicide prevention. For more information about upcoming Survivors of Suicide events, or to see photos of this year’s Walk/Run, please visit www.empactsos.org

Survivors Rhonda Bannard, Chris Orsini, Dawn Perkinson, Nani Kim, and Paula Jensen participating in the Memorial Tree Ceremony; all were present at the very first Jeremyah Memorial Walk in 2007.
The Dark Place that Beckons

by Sue Andersen

There is a dark place that beckons, but I have learned how to avoid it. I’ve been thinking a lot these past couple of weeks about light and dark in my life. How the light is “outshining” the dark. But early in my journey, especially the first couple of years, I lived in that dark place a lot. I was caught up in a seemingly never-ending cycle of dark, negative thoughts.

The summer of 2014, I recall for months the thought “my son is dead” played nonstop in my head. I couldn’t let go of it for a long time. Beginning three months after my son died, I started taking yoga classes. Meditation, breath work, mindfulness training, yoga training and good support have all contributed to my focus on “light” and not dark. New and old friends; family members continue to light up my life. And when I begin to move towards that dark place, when negative thoughts start to take over, I breathe, tell my son I love him, and look for light.

He is my light too, helping me find my path. Never in a million years would I have thought I could be at this place now. It’s been over three and a half years since Ian took his life. Allow yourself to work through your grief, to find a way out of that dark place that beckons, for you, too, will find light.

Reprinted from the February 2016 edition of The Obelisk.

This post first appeared on the Alliance of Hope for Suicide Survivors forum.
Survivors of Suicide Program Offers Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy

Suicide is traumatic. It often is sudden and unexpected. When the death of a loved one involves trauma, those who are left behind must find a way to deal with the complicated grief and trauma associated with the suicide.

The Survivors of Suicide Program at EMPACT-Suicide Prevention Center has expanded its services for those bereaved by suicide, to include EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy). EMDR is an evidence-based psychotherapy for treating Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and it is designated as an effective treatment by the American Psychiatric Association and the World Health Organization. EMDR therapy shows that the mind can heal from psychological trauma in the same way that the body recovers from physical trauma. It has been found to be an effective tool for alleviating trauma in grief.

EMDR reduces or resolves traumatic memories and enhances resilience. Many Survivors of Suicide have found EMDR to be very helpful in dealing with the trauma of their loss, and the associated complicated grief.

For more information about EMDR for Survivors of Suicide, or if you are interested in individual therapy, please contact Sanja Sobo, MC, LPC: Sanja.Sobo@LaFrontera-EMPACT.org/480-784-1514, ext. 4202.

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Someone I loved very much has ended their own life. I will never truly know all that was happening in their mind that brought them to that tragic choice. However, there are things of which I can be reasonably certain...  
— If they were here, even they could not fully explain their mindset or answer all of my questions.  
— In their state of mind, they could not have fully comprehended the reality of their own death.  
— They could not have fully appreciated the devastating impact their suicide would have on the people in their life.  
As such, by their last act, they made their most tragic mistake, unknowingly creating unparalleled pain in the hearts of those whom they most loved. The person I lost is beyond my help now in every way but one: I can help them by working to ease the pain they have caused and by not allowing their most enduring legacy to be one of tragedy. They benefit from this help whether or not I perceive them as welcoming it, in the same way that we help the aggressor whenever we nurse his victim—by minimizing the damage he has caused.  
As a result, each and every day, I can help the person I lost by... enjoying life. ...smiling and laughing. ...not dwelling in feelings of sadness or remorse. ...loving others. ...taking new steps in life toward positive new horizons ...helping those who feel their loss to do the same. ...and, in short, not letting their mistake continue to create sorrow, neither in the world around me, nor in myself. I will try to picture my lost loved one asking me to do this every day—to please help undo the damage they caused in whatever little ways possible. And I promise that I will.

SOS Memorial Quilts

Our 7th Quilt was showcased at the Jeremyah Memorial 5K Walk/Run on February 6th. We have begun working on the 8th Quilt. If you are interested in having your loved one appear on this next quilt, please email the following information to:

Sandra.McNally@LaFrontera-Empact.org

- A picture or pictures of your loved one that you want to use on the quilt.
- Full name of your loved one.
- Dates of your loved one’s birth and death.
- A message you would like included—it can be anything but needs to fit on an 8” x 8” square with the picture(s).
For more information, contact:

Sandra McNally, Prevention Manager
EMPACT SPC
618 S. Madison Drive
Tempe, AZ 85281
Phone: 480-784-1514, ext. 1219
E-mail: Sandra.McNally@LaFrontera-EMPACT.org

Your Partner for a Safe, Strong, and Healthy Community.

Resources:

Crisis/Suicide Hotlines:
- La Frontera Arizona/EMPACT-SPC:
  480-784-1500
- National Lifeline Network:
  800-273-TALK
- Mercy Maricopa Crisis Hotline
  800-631-1314

Internet Resources:
- American Association of Suicidology:
  www.suicidology.com
- American Foundation of Suicide Prevention:
  www.afsp.org

Research Opportunity: Starting the first week of March.

Seeking Survivors of Suicide for a music therapy research study

Description of Project: Survivors of suicide who have experienced a suicide loss in the last three years are wanted for a research study to examine the potential benefits of music therapy in the healing process.

To Participate You Must:
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide in the last 3 years
- Be able to attend weekly 1.5 hour music therapy sessions for up to 6 weeks

For more information on this research study contact alexis.edmonds@asu.edu