Save the Date

“Hope and Healing”
The 18th Annual Arizona Survivors of Suicide Conference
Saturday, June 16, 2018
8:30am—3:00pm
Black Canyon Conference Center
9440 N. 25th Avenue - Phoenix, AZ 85021

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

Stuart Smith, MA, LPC
Clinical Coordinator of the National Resource Center for Suicide Prevention and Aftercare at The Link Counseling Center—Atlanta

Stuart Smith is a licensed psychotherapist serving clients in the greater Atlanta area. His therapeutic work at The Link and his private practice is dedicated largely to grief work, relationships, and psychological growth. Stuart offers talks and workshops on a number of topics including how to provide support to those bereaved by suicide.

Registration will be available after April 1, 2018.
For more information, please contact Sandra McNally: Sandra.McNally@lafrontera-empact.org
A Day of Hope & Healing for Survivors and the Community

On Saturday, February 10th, EMPACT-SPC held its 12th Annual Jeremyah Memorial 5K Walk/Run to Support Survivors of Suicide. At this year’s event, which was held at Kiwanis Park in Tempe, close to 700 people were in attendance.

In addition to Survivors of Suicide attending this event, many community agencies participated by forming walking/running teams and by sponsoring the event, groups such as Cenpatico Integrated Care, Mercy Care Plan/Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care, and Crisis Response Network. Local businesses, such as Starbucks, Einstein Bagels, and Barraza Trade Company Coffee Truck, donated food and beverages, and Chase Bank donated the water for the event; their employees volunteered their time at the event by distributing water to walkers/runners and helping with setup and cleanup.

The Memorial Walk/Run was started in 2007 by one of EMPACT’s volunteers, Chris Orsini, who lost his son Jeremyah to suicide. This annual event has been one way for survivors to honor their loved ones who have died by suicide, as well as a way for EMPACT-SPC to raise community awareness about the issue of suicide.

For more information about EMPACT-SPC’s Survivors of Suicide program, please contact Sandra McNally: Sandra.McNally@LaFrontera-EMPACT.org

Participants at this year’s Walk/Run, engaging in the Balloon Release (a ceremony dedicated to honoring those who have died by suicide).
My Army

I have an army behind me. It’s an invisible army. But it’s there.

My army is a community of other suicide loss survivors. They get it. All of it.

They personally and intimately understand the emotional energy expended fighting through the grief battle. They too have been wounded by the words and actions of their friends and loved ones who, through indifference or ignorance, take up arms against them. They have also been thrown off guard, the wind knocked out of them, by bittersweet and unexpected memory bombs. They too have been disoriented, lost, injured, and isolated in the chaos, confusion and questions involved with this battle. They have also been bombarded with society’s discomfort and propaganda about suicide being selfish, sinful, or the easy way out.

They may have considered surrender but they are determined to do more than just survive. They are hell bent on winning the war.

This army of mine feeds me hope when I’m running on empty. They drop their shields to cry with me when I’m overwhelmed with emotion. They dress me in protective armor when I’m not tough enough to deal with the barrage of fire. They raise up their swords of indignation against those who lack tact or compassion. They speak inspirational words of encouragement and advice that reinvigorate me on my mission.

They stand solidly behind me and I stand solidly behind them. In our weakness, we are strong together. They make the unbearable bearable. They provide warmth and light in the cold darkness of grief.

To my army of suicide loss survivors, thank you. You’ve made all the difference. I wish none of us had been conscripted into this army but I’m glad to be fighting beside you. Together, I know we will win. Together, I know we can make a difference.

If you’ve lost a loved one to suicide, I highly encourage you to attend a survivors of suicide loss support group (sometimes called an SOS support group). For all the reasons I’ve described above, they’ve become a family of sorts. They simply just get it.

My support group is a warm, welcoming place and has truly been the single most comforting source of support on my journey. I cannot say enough good things about the people and the structure. The setting is no-pressure – you can speak or just listen. You can cry, vent, rant, ask questions, and solicit input. Sometimes, listening is the best medicine. To hear the emotional struggles of others going through the same tragedy aids in feeling less alone and lonely in your own grief. It assures you that your own feelings do not make you crazy. Most importantly, hearing people at different stages can give you hope that the pain and darkness will subside and that you will make it through. Because you will. YOU will survive. And you can thrive. You may even find lasting friendships and people whom you can join together with in an effort to make change and have an impact in the area of suicide prevention and mental health awareness.

If you’re in the Phoenix metropolitan area, consider attending an EMPACT-SOS group. You can find information about locations and times here:

http://empactsos.org/support-groups/

(written by a group member of the Tempe SOS Group)
EMPACT-SPC is interested in expanding its SOS Program and is looking for new facilitators to help co-lead our support groups.

SOS Group Facilitator Qualifications:

1. Must be a Survivor of Suicide, with at least 2 years since the loss occurred.
2. Must submit a Volunteer Application, including references.
3. Must successfully complete our SOS Group Facilitator Training.
4. Must be willing to facilitate an SOS Group at least 1x per month and attend our monthly volunteer supervision meeting.

For more information, please contact Sandra McNally at 480-784-1514, ext. 1219.

“Perhaps the butterfly is proof that you can go through a great deal of darkness and still become something beautiful.”
An Opportunity for Survivors of Suicide Loss:
Pathway to Peace of Mind
Tools to regain joy, strength, and peace of mind
An Online Course, presented by Elaine Alpert
(A Companion Course to Iris Bolton's Latest Book, “Voices of Healing and Hope”)

In this 4-week online program, Elaine will show you how to take charge of your own healing after the devastating impact of suicide, addressing key issues identified in Iris's book:


Here’s what you get in the Course...

1) Four engaging 90-minute Sessions, live video online (you can choose to participate by audio only). Personalized support from Elaine with the tools during Sessions, as you want it.

2) Video & Audio Recordings available within 24 hours after each Session.

3) Your complimentary copy of Iris’s book, Voices of Healing and Hope.

4) Voices of Healing and Hope DVD: Compelling video interviews with loss survivors sharing about their loss, what they did to heal and where they are now (5 hours total).

5) Handouts and charts for the Sessions.

6) Access to the private Facebook group, where Elaine offers feedback & guidance.

Elaine will give you some of the very tools she used in her own journey of healing.

To Register, please go to www.elainealpert.com/peace

(Upcoming Course Dates: 4 Wednesdays: March 7, 14, 21 and 28 @ 12:30pm - 1:45pm Eastern).
Grief is the last act of love we have to give to those we loved. Where there is deep grief there was great love.

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).
“Creating a Legacy”
Planned Giving for EMPACT-SPC's Survivors of Suicide Program

“Creating a Legacy” for EMPACT-SPC's Survivors of Suicide Program is a beautiful opportunity to remember a loved one, and to contribute to the healing of others in our community who have been impacted by a tragic loss to suicide. It is a way to contribute to an agency and program whose mission is to help others in their healing journey.

Nonprofit agencies such as EMPACT-SPC need financial assistance in order to continue their critical work in the community. By making a planned gift, you can make a difference in the lives of others by helping to ensure that EMPACT-SPC is able to continue supporting our Survivors of Suicide program for years to come. The process of Creating a Legacy can be as easy as naming EMPACT-SPC’s Survivors of Suicide program in your will, or as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan proceeds.

If you would like to become a part of EMPACT-SPC's Survivors of Suicide "Creating a Legacy" program, or if you have any questions, please contact Sandra McNally, Survivors of Suicide Program Manager, at (480) 784-1514, ext. 1219 or at Sandra.McNally@lafrontera-empact.org

You also may write to us at EMPACT-SPC, c/o Sandra McNally, 618 S. Madison Drive, Tempe, AZ 85281. We will be happy to provide you information about options for planned giving.