

**STATE-WIDE
SOS GROUPS**

In-person Groups

TEMPE SOS GROUP

1st and 3rd Thursday
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
EMPACT-SPC
618 S. Madison Dr, Tempe
**PHOENIX/SCOTTSDALE
SOS GROUP**

2nd and 4th Wednesday
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Prince of Peace Church
3641 N. 56th St, Phoenix

WEST VALLEY SOS GROUP

2nd and 4th Tuesday
7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
EMPACT-SPC
4425 W. Olive, Suite 194
Glendale

**PARADISE VALLEY SOS
GROUP - NEW LOCATION**

1st and 3rd Wednesday
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Shiloh Community Church
19021 N. 32nd St., Phoenix

Other Statewide

Groups (currently not meeting in-person due to COVID-19)

EAST MESA SOS GROUP

2nd and 4th Thursday
6:00 pm—8:00 pm
Red Mountain
Multigenerational Center
7550 E. Adobe Rd, Mesa
QUEEN CREEK SOS GROUP

1st and 3rd Tuesday
7pm—8:30pm
AMADEO Vineyard Church
21803 S. Ellsworth Rd. #E102,
Queen Creek

TUCSON SOS GROUP

1st and 3rd Thursday
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Catalina Methodist Church
2700 E. Speedway Blvd,
Tucson

PRESCOTT SOS GROUP

Last Monday
6pm—8pm
First Congregational Church
216 E. Gurley St, Prescott
SEDONA SOS GROUP

SEDONA SOS GROUP

Last Tuesday
6:30pm—8:30pm
Christ Lutheran Church
25 Chapel Rd., Sedona

Virtual Support

Groups

Please visit
www.empactsos.org to
register for one of our
monthly virtual groups.



Survivors of Suicide Newsletter

Stay Connected



WINTER EDITION 2020

A day of healing...a day of remembering those we lost.

The 15th Annual
Jeremyah Memorial 5K

**Walk/Run to
Support Survivors
of Suicide**

Saturday February 6, 2021
8:00 a.m.

Sponsored by



Help Us Raise Awareness for Suicide Prevention

Kiwanis Park—Ruben Romero Corporate Ramada

This year, we will be hosting this event with some changes, in order to comply with CDC guidelines for events:

- **Participants must register/donate online:** www.empactsos.org (Registration will open on **December 15th**)
- **There will be no onsite registration.**
- **We are limiting the number of participants to comply with City of Tempe regulations (limit of 300 participants).**
- **All participants entering the ramada must wear a mask; social distancing in the ramada area will be enforced.**
- **The ceremony will be live-streamed; details will be available in January.**

Additional safety guidelines will be outlined on the event registration form.

Thanksgiving and the Holidays

Retrieved from:

www.sosmadison.com/blog/thanksgiving-and-other-holidays-after-a-suicide-loss



Finding hope and happiness is so hard for most survivors during the holiday season. We remember several well-meaning people telling us what we should be doing to make us feel better. They meant well, but they could not possibly understand the grief that we felt. That first Thanksgiving and Christmas felt more like an obligation than something we felt like doing. We had lost our voices, we were struggling to express how we really felt 7 months after our son's death. The world seemed to have moved on for everyone else besides our immediate family. We stumbled through that first holiday season with a mix of tears and profound grief. It truly was a winter where our life shut down and went dormant.

We didn't take control of those first holidays and we tried to go through the motions like other people wanted us to. We went to Thanksgiving dinner at a relative's house and tried to pretend that we were thankful and put false smiles on our faces. The elephant in the room was that our son was missing and no one said his name to us at first. We felt alone in a room filled with people who loved us. They were just clueless and were struggling in their own ways as well.

We put up the Christmas tree and cried as we hung the handmade ornaments that our son had made over the years. What had been a cute addition in years past was now a painful reminder of his absence. We discussed if we should hang his stocking by the fireplace with the rest (we did and still do!). We were lost and we knew we had to do something better in the future.

With Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and New Years just around the corner, it is time to think about what you are going to do this year. When you lose a loved one to suicide, these holidays can be a challenge. It is impossible to celebrate these events this year the way you have in the past and expect that they will be the same. You are missing someone, and that is the elephant in the room. Some family and friends will want to discuss the person who is missing from the gathering, and others will avoid mentioning their name. You may not have the strength to participate in formal events. It comes down to doing what works for you.

It is hard to feel Happy, Merry, or Thankful right after you lose a loved one to suicide. The sadness and pain can be overwhelming. Quite honestly, it is hard to focus on much other than the loss of your loved one and the thought of a holiday and gathering of family and friends can be difficult to think about. I always thought the lyrics to a song called "[Better Days](#)" by the Goo Goo Dolls captured how I felt about the holidays right after our son's death. The lyrics read:

And you asked me what I want this year—And I try to make this kind and clear

Just a chance that maybe we'll find better days -'Cause I don't need boxes wrapped in strings

And designer love and empty things—Just a chance that maybe we'll find better days

Here are some tips and ideas to help with the holidays ahead:

- Talk among your immediate family before the event about how you are all feeling and what you are up to. Don't let anyone push you to go to an event that you are not ready for. Not everyone has to attend.

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- Do what you think will give you the most strength and energy for these events. That may be different from what people tell you, or might be pushing you to do. Only you truly know what you are up to doing for these events.
- Often it helps to have a "friend" in the room that you speak honestly with prior to the gathering. Your trusted ally can help get you out of conversations you feel uncomfortable with and they can chat with folks prior to your arrival. They can be your "wingman" for the day and keep an active eye out for you and provide you added strength and support you might need.
- You don't have to do the same activity as you have done in years past. In fact, trying to do the same event without the missing person may only make things worse. You can do something different: have a Thanksgiving breakfast, just have deserts, have a coffee tasting, go out to a restaurant, take out all of your photos and leave them around for people to talk about, ask people to bring stories / videos/ photos of your loved one to share with the group, stay home and have a quiet day, etc, etc.
- For a few years, we shifted to just stopping in on family and friends for only coffee and desert after the event was mostly over; it allowed us to see everyone, but not feel the pressure to stay the whole time. Folks just want to see how you are doing.
- Remember it is only 24 hours. Most survivors start thinking and worrying about the events long in advance. Be kind to yourself and know that you will wake up the next day and the sun will rise once again.
- It is also a good idea to have a "Plan B". With great intentions you decide in advance that you might participate in some activity. But, when you wake up, or when you go to drive to the event, you don't have the strength to follow through with your original plans. That's when you shift to "Plan B". It is not a failure, it is just a different choice for the day. It might be something as simple as a walk in the park, stopping by a house of worship, or visiting someplace that gives you strength and happiness. People understand that you are grieving and they will understand that you might need a change of plans for that day.
- Avoid hosting the event at your home. If you suddenly feel overwhelmed, it is hard to disappear if you need a quiet moment. Consider letting someone else host the event this year. You deserve a break.
- Some families like to do a more formal recognition of the person who is missing around the table. I have heard of people going around the table and asking each person to tell a short positive/ funny memory about the person who is missing. Some people make a remembrance jar that can be used at any family event.
- Some folks even set a place at the table for the missing person and place a picture or candle on their plate.
- It all comes down to healing the way you need to and acknowledging that those around you are also healing. Some people use the event as a way to let those around them know in advance how they are doing. You could send an email out to folks in advance of the event and share how you are doing and that it is ok to talk about your missing loved one. Tell them some of the things that you need to get through the coming event. Share with them [this handout](#) about helping survivors of suicide loss. Remember, they are clueless about what you are going through unless you help to educate them. Most folks want to help, but they are just clueless about what to do, or we have shut them down in advance. This is an opportunity to rekindle the deep friendships you have and let the "helpers" back into your life.

One last tip: avoid alcohol or other intoxicating substances during these events. You need to stay sharp and manage your emotions, even though folks around you are having too much. There are always people in the crowd that will say the wrong thing and you want to be able to respond or walk away with a clear head. Alcohol can also lower your energy and just make your day worse. It is never a good idea to get lost in a drink when your emotions and grief are causing you pain.

Messages for Suicide Loss Survivors During the Holidays

Reprinted from: <https://themighty.com/2016/12/surviving-the-holidays-after-suicide-loss/>

“Just breathe. If you need to excuse yourself and have a few moments alone, then do it. I like to talk about my brother a lot during a holiday. I like to think about what he would be doing if he were there. It works well for me but may not work well for someone else. Do what feels right for you!” — Ronni W

“Don’t ever let anyone tell you how to grieve. There’s no right or wrong answer. Just human, individual responses.”— Don K

“You do what you need to survive the holidays. Do as little or as much as you want/need to do. You don’t have to justify your actions or decisions to anybody. The first Christmas without my son (this is my 11th), I purchased all new blue and silver ornaments in honor of him. Blue is his favorite color. So every year I put up *his* tree.” — Tina S

“It gets better!
Keep their love and memories alive, celebrate their gifts and the love you were fortunate enough to have been given by them! It is painful now, but just know that it gets better.” — Jen W



SOS Memorial Quilts



We are in the process of completing our 8th Quilt. If you are interested in having your loved one appear on the 9th 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 Care Crisis Hotline

800-631-1314

Internet Resources:

- American Association of Suicidology:

www.suicidology.org

- American Foundation of Suicide Prevention:

www.afsp.org

“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, Prevention Manager
618 S. Madison Dr., Tempe, AZ 85281

We will be happy to provide you information about options for planned giving.

