

**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
6:00pm - 8:00pm
EMPACT-SPC
4425 W. Olive, Suite 194
Glendale

PARADISE VALLEY SOS
GROUP

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

EAST MESA SOS GROUP

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

PRESCOTT SOS GROUP

Last Thursday
6:30pm—8pm
Gateway Mall Community Room
3250 Gateway Blvd, Prescott

SEDONA SOS GROUP

Last Tuesday
4:00pm—5:30pm
Christ Lutheran Church
25 Chapel Rd., Sedona

GREEN VALLEY SOS GROUP

First Thursday
1:00pm—2:30pm
Friends In Deed
301 W. Camino Casa Verde,
Green Valley

TUCSON SOS GROUP

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

Virtual Support
Groups

Please visit
www.empactsos.org for
more information.



Survivors of Suicide Newsletter

Stay Connected

FALL/WINTER EDITION 2022



SAVE THE DATE!



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

**The 17th Annual
Jeremyah Memorial 5K**

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

Saturday February 4, 2023 – 8:30 a.m.

Sponsored by



Help Us Raise Awareness for Suicide Prevention

**For more information and to register,
please visit www.empactsos.org
after December 15.**

10 Tips for Surviving the Holidays After Losing a Loved One

By Rachel Smak

(Reprinted from medium.com)



The smell of nutmeg and cinnamon, the taste of candied yams and roasted turkeys, the sights of houses adorned with cypress branches and Christmas lights, the feeling of snowflakes melting as they fall on our bare skin, and the sounds of sleigh bells, carolers, and crackling fires...This is what many of us think of when we think of the holidays. But for some, the five senses that used to entertain in the merriment of the season have been replaced with a different sense — a sense of loss.

Growing up, the holidays were always a jolly time for me, but this year they feel more like a twist of the knife after losing my mom to suicide last December, just five days before Christmas. For me, the holidays are now represented by an empty chair at the table. They're a glance at an electric mixer that used to house the cherished memories of hours slaved over the stove mashing potatoes together from scratch, and they're a heaping serving of reality that my holidays will never look and feel the same way again.

The serving is heavy, arduous, and its side dishes are isolation and exhaustion with overwhelm served for dessert. Anyone who has ever lost someone they love understands that those first few holiday milestones also lose their celebratory qualities. The loss feels fresher, and the pain feels deeper around this time of year. So if your holidays are heaping in a big serving of grief this year, here are ten tips for coping with the loss:

1. Acknowledge that the holidays will feel different and will be difficult.

This season can be an emotional minefield, and most of the time just the anticipation over how tough something is going to be is worse than the actual event itself. I found this to be especially true for the first Thanksgiving I spent without my mom. While Thanksgiving dinner only lasted a few hours, I spent weeks dreading it, but when it finally came, while it was hard, it wasn't as difficult as I'd imagined it to be.

2. Remember their memory.

There's a misconception that bringing up a deceased loved one's memory will inflame the pain, but for the grieving, saying the name of the person you lost and sharing memories in conversation, help with the coping. Remember those you've lost. Tell stories about them. Dust off old photo albums and spend some time during the holidays looking through old photos and sharing old memories.

3. Seek support.

With everything and everyone filled with so much gosh-darn holiday cheer around this time of year, sometimes it's helpful to talk with others who understand the struggle. Reminding loved ones when you're having a rough time may be enough, but it also never hurts to reach out for more support. I am going to a suicide survivors support group, and I'm finding some relief each time I go simply talking and knowing I'm not alone in my feelings.

4. Explore the holidays in a new way.

Grief is a license to evaluate what parts of the holidays you enjoy and what parts you don't. Don't be apprehensive to create entirely new traditions or alter familiar ones to make them fit better with this new phase in your life. Keep in mind—there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays in grief. You and you alone decide what is right for you.

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5. *Pass on holiday events if you are in holiday overload.*

Skip the holiday altogether. Yes, you can cancel the holiday. Grief can be a beautiful permission slip to learn how to say no to everyone and everything else around you so you can say yes to yourself and self-care. Be honest with yourself and what your needs are. If you find yourself going through the motions and feeling nothing, cancel them. Take a year off. They will come around again. Take inventory of how you're feeling and what you truly want this holiday season, and skip on doing anything that does not serve your soul and your loss.

6. *Seek gratitude.*

"Gratitude is a vaccine, an antitoxin, and an antiseptic." — John Henry Jowet. If you find yourself in the holiday funks this year, practice daily gratitude throughout the season. Intentionally choose it. Write it down, photograph it, send out holiday gratitude cards to friends and loved ones ... whatever that looks like for you, gratitude matters so look for the little things.

7. *Avoid social media.*

There are a lot of triggers you can't control around the holidays like being subjected to Christmas music in line at Trader Joes. Constantly seeing holiday inspired posts as you scroll through Instagram and Facebook can leave you comparing how you choose to participate in holiday festivities against the "magical" gatherings depicted in your feed. It's ok to limit the time you spend on social media if you find the holiday posts provoking pains of longing. Logging out for a while can help assert some level of control over your holiday cheer and remember, that life goes on for other people and it's OK that they're happy to celebrate this year just as its equally OK if you're not.

8. *Allow yourself to feel.*

The holidays can trigger a wide range of emotions. One of the harshest parts of surviving the jubilee of the season for the grieving is the belief they have to be joyful and merry during them. The grieving often feel bad for not feeling good around the holidays, or guilty if they do manage to enjoy themselves because they think they should still be in mourning. It can be a vicious cycle. Allow yourself to feel those emotions, whatever they are, without judgment.

9. *Create your own honorary family.*

If you find yourself alone this season, select your kindest and most supportive friends to celebrate with. Host a Christmas cookie exchange, send out invites for a tree trimming party, or attend an ugly sweater celebration. Family isn't always blood and friends are the family you get to choose. Choose ones who understand, and who accept you for who you are.

10. *Pay it forward.*

Even in the midst of grief, you still have something to offer the world. Performing a few acts of kindness can be good for the grieving spirit. Doing something kind for others, such as volunteering at a soup kitchen, delivering presents to the disadvantaged, or working with children, may lift your spirits and help everyone feel better about the holidays.

The holidays are some of the roughest terrains we navigate after a loss, and the ways we cope with them are as individual as we are. However you choose to spend your holidays, know that you will get through them and come out on the other side stronger than you were before. And if happiness does slip onto your plate of grief this year, allow yourself to take a bite and enjoy it. Feast on whatever little moments of holiday cheer you find this season. You won't be doing the memory of your loved one any injustice by feeling stuffed with joy. The best gift you can give and receive this time of year is being true to yourself and living your life to the fullest, even as you adjust to the loss.

It takes a lot of courage to live life as a griever. To face the world each day with a smile when you're actually crying inside.

To engage in conversations with others when you just wish you could be left alone.

To be made to look forward to the future when you just wish to go back to the yesterdays.

It takes a lot of courage to reach down within yourself and tell yourself that you will do your best to survive yet another day.



By Narin Grewal—Reprinted from Survivors of Suicide Bereavement Support Association

SOS Memorial Quilts



Here is the latest Quilt. If you are interested in having your loved one appear on the 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).**





EMPACT - SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER

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: 988
- Mercy Care Crisis Hotline
800-631-1314

Internet/National 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 program, or if you have any questions, please contact **Sandra McNally at (480) 784-1514, ext. 1219 or 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.

