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NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

BI-ANNUAL JANUARY/JUNE

JANUARY 2013

Dear Friends,

Another six months have passed; a New Year is upon us. I trust this year is healthy and good for all of you.

Once again, many thanks for all the contributions you have sent for this newsletter. Please keep them coming so that the newsletter can be valuable to you all. We need information about your group and its activities, together with poems, book reviews and anything else you think folk would be interested in. Photographs are also very acceptable. Please use the email below.

I look forward to hearing from many of you soon.

Best wishes,
Ann
Surrey Group Leader
Email: ann_culley79@yahoo.co.uk

SOBS LEJOG 2012

Olly, Harry and Rob Taylor and Will Goodwin cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats to raise money for our charity. In 2005 Olly, Harry and Rob tragically lost Fee – beloved wife and mother. The effect of suicide can be life changing, and devastating for those left behind.

It was 4 years before they discovered SOBS but when they did it was a time of recovery for them as they attended meetings, used the 'phone helpline and shared their experience with others also bereaved by suicide. Their feelings have led them to want to 'give something back'. They were able to raise in the region of £23,100.



We extend our grateful thanks to them for such a successful and ambitious project, and to all who joined them in this venture.

THE HEART OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE AWARD

In 2009 I witnessed the suicide of a close family member who had suffered a brief psychotic episode'. Needless to say the devastation and trauma was overwhelming. Two days after it happened I saw my G.P. to ask for help and requested a referral to see a counsellor but was told that it was too soon for counselling.

Confused and in shock I felt utterly bereft, isolated and desperate for help. I needed to talk about it but was

unable to discuss it with my closest members of family as I didn't want to upset them. As anyone who has lost someone to suicide will understand, I felt overwhelming grief and guilt. The feeling of guilt was intensified by the fact that I had been there when it happened but was physically unable to prevent it.

Over the next few days I rang bereavement support groups and even went to see a priest. I needed to talk about what had happened and also desperately wanted to find answers. Ten days later a friend was talking to a colleague about what I was going through. This colleague had also been bereaved by suicide and she passed on the telephone number of SOBS helpline. I ran the helpline that same day.

After this first call I was contacted by Trish Thomas who runs the local SOBS support group. We talked (or rather she listened to me while I cried) for a long time. She understood my feelings of distress, anger, fear and guilt and she explained how they are normal reactions after this type of bereavement. She made sure that I felt ok before the call ended and that I was to call her any time I needed to talk. Trish posted literature out to me the same day with lots of advice and information and advised me to seek help from 'Lets Talk'. Unfortunately I had just missed that month's local support meeting but Trish invited me to the meeting the following month.

These monthly meetings were a godsend and my lifeline. It was, and still is, the only place I can go and talk with people who really understand how I feel and what I have been through.

The Citizen newspaper ran a Heart of Gloucestershire Award earlier this year and invited readers to nominate members of the community who unselfishly give their time to helping others. I nominated Trish Thomas as she is an absolute tower of strength and has supported, advised and helped so many people. Her commitment to Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide is outstanding and she is constantly busy organising conferences and the annual retreat. Last year she campaigned to have anti-suicide netting installed at a multi-storey car park which was recently built opposite to an acute mental health hospital.



The nominations were short listed by a panel of judges and Trish was a finalist. The award ceremony took place on 22nd June at the Cheltenham Racecourse and the awards were presented to the winners by the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

Steph Fox

This Information has
been removed at the
request of the author

20th March 2017

Lastly, the Farthing Trust have donated £500 to Suffolk SOBS which is fantastic. Along with a very big thank you card I've asked Farthing Trust if they would consider having a photo shoot with the local press in Cambridge."

Suzy

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

SOBS SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT FORUM 27/9/12

This first forum was led by John Peters and specifically prepared for professionals and volunteers likely to be supporting those bereaved by suicide. Around 120 attended and contributed vigorously to the workshop sessions. It was a salutary lesson that several of them were coming into contact with SOBS for the first time. John's introduction to the Survivor's Perspective will have been particularly beneficial to them.

Among the other speakers was Michelle Linn-Gust from the United States, who talked about the effect of suicide on families. Later she also described the work of the American Association for Suicidology, raising the question of whether there is a similar role that needs to be filled in the UK.

Mark Haith, from the University of Abertay, Dundee described the impact of suicide upon the Health Professional, from his own personal experience. Dr. Sharon McDonnell from the University of Manchester explained the development of a Parental Suicide Bereavement Training Pack for Health Professionals.

For SOBS the talk by Dr. Alison Chapple of Oxford University on Online Support for Survivors was of great interest. She referred to www.healthtalkline.org as the type of Internet Chat Room where survivors could share experiences with immediate responses. She also gave a number of American examples, specifically for those bereaved by suicide. The question of how this is moderated was raised, and requires considerable thought. Many, especially the younger survivors are already using these forums and it made me think that something similar from SOBS would definitely add to the services we offer.

Geoff Price

INTERNET MEMORIAL RESEARCH

Dr Jo Bell, j.bell@hull.ac.uk, of Hull University is carrying out research into the relatively new phenomenon of Internet Memorials. For some people I am sure these are very helpful but possibly not for all.

If you have any experience of such memorials, Jo would love to hear from you (email as above).

If you wish to talk this over with me, please call John Peters, 01827 830 679 or email john.peters@manchester.ac.uk.

SUFFOLK SOBS UPDATE

Suzy writes;

"Apparently, William Armstrong's plea for support for survivors in Norfolk has been a massive success, so much so they are considering holding a second day to accommodate everyone – we are on their list to attend but only if there are any cancellations.

The police have printed their new leaflets for police officers who attend sudden deaths in Suffolk and we are now listed on the contact numbers alongside Samaritans and Cruse.

The East Anglian Daily Times in Ipswich came out on Friday to take our photos at Little Waitrose, Ipswich. Out of a total pot of £500 we received £255 and the feedback was very encouraging. Staff said for the first time they had customers asking them to give them more information about this charity called SOBS, almost on a daily basis.

RETREAT ROSS ON WYE 2012

A few comments on the 2012 retreat:

“Walking into a room of complete strangers and not feeling alone; good company, lovely activities, fabulous food and having time and permission to pamper myself; meaningful discussion and the giving and receiving of compassion and empathy.”

“The retreat is somewhere I’m truly able to converse with others who understand. They ALL know what I mean. Words aren’t always necessary.”

“An extraordinary experience meeting lovely people with whom I felt, sadly, an instant bond. My overwhelming feeling was one of relief that I did not have to hide that wounded part of myself. It was very therapeutic and RELAXING.”

“A weekend with lots of laughter and good food; openly able to talk about myself, or not; time out for me.”

Vivien Culpan

PAPYRUS TRAINING IN SUICIDE INTERVENTION

A.S.I.S.T (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day, skills-building, interactive workshop that prepares caregivers of all kinds to provide suicide first aid interventions.

Professionals, volunteers and informal helpers all need to know how to help people with thought of suicide in ways that increase their suicide safety.

As an ASIST trained first aid intervention caregiver we are better able to:

- Identify people who have thoughts of suicide.
- Understand how beliefs and attitudes can affect suicide interventions.
- Seek a shared understanding of the reasons for thoughts of suicide and the reasons for living.
- Review current risk and develop a plan to increase safety from suicidal behaviour for an agreed amount of time.
- Follow up on all safety commitments, accessing further help as needed.

About 20 of us gathered in Derby for this training. We each received a workshop workbook which we spent the next two days working through. At the end we each received a certificate of attendance.

The training consisted of talks, videos, discussions and role play as we worked through the workshop workbook. The role play was non-threatening and very helpful and most of us took part. We were also given various scenarios and asked how we would react in such situations.

Our instructors were professional and very good. It was one of the best training courses I have done.

Ann

PAPYRUS PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

Suicide is the leading killer of young people under 35 years old in the UK.

PAPYRUS is the UK national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. Founded in 1997 by Jean Kerr, a mother from Lancashire who lost her young son to suicide, the charity has grown to become a UK wide membership organisation. Membership is open to all who share the aims of the organisation, wishing to reduce the number of young suicides in the UK and raise awareness of what can be done to help save young lives.

The Board of Trustees includes a number of members who have been touched by or indeed bereaved by a young suicide. In that way we share much with Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide. Inevitably our work does touch on postvention support and work with those who have been bereaved as this may help to prevent future tragedies. Our focus, however, is always prevention.

Our HOPELineUK service ([0800 068 41 41](tel:08000684141)) is the national young suicide prevention helpline. Staffed by professionals, the service offers practical advice to young people who may be suicidal or to those who have a concern about a vulnerable young person they may know.

We also provide advice by text, email and through our website: papyrus-uk.org – and our social media help us to engage with an even wider following. We often refer people to SOBS groups or to their helpline where enquiries focus on bereavement support. Our literature and resources aim to be accessible to people who may be suicidal and to those concerned about them.

The charity delivers training in young suicide prevention and awareness as well as working in schools, colleges, universities, community organisations, indeed anywhere where we can help to raise awareness of the scale of young suicide and suicidal behaviours in the UK. It was a great privilege for us to be able to work with members of SOBS recently in offering our Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training.

PAPYRUS believes that many young suicides can be prevented. If you are reading this and would like to know more, please contact me by email at ged.flynn@papyrus-uk.org or one of our team in Warrington on 01925 572 444.

Together, we may help to save young lives; you might like to join us.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Ged Flynn, PAPYRUS Chief Executive
BOLTON GROUP – ASDA



Noel, Janet and Maria were involved in the Asda fundraising and awareness day in November. They wore lilac polo neck jumpers and purple sashes.



The SOBS banner attracted considerable attention and helped raise a lot of awareness and £318.65. Congratulations and well done to the Bolton group.

Noel and Janet Taylor

SENIOR OFFICERS REPORT – NEW PROTOCOL

At the start of 1998 to 2012, lengthy meetings and discussions with the Gloucester Police, and a Director of 2gether NHS Trust for Mental Health to work collaboratively to devise a new operations protocol, is now in effect. The protocol is for officers who deal with a suicide/take a death message (when asked by another police force when the death has occurred out of our area) to include as part of their 'routine' the provision of the leaflet to the bereaved family/individual.

They are also required to ask the bereaved if they wish to give permission for their contact details (address only) to be passed to the 2gether NHS Trust, so that a letter can be sent out to them outlining how they can access support in coping with the bereavement (a similar process to that happens after a crime and Victim Support are involved), no-one will 'doorstep' them and all details are confidential to the Police and the NHS.

When delivering a death message, the Guidance notes are available on the IT system to help the officers concerned and give them greater confidence in tackling a task that on-one ever wants to do.

In December 2012 Inspector Wood presented a report to the Senior Officers Meeting and it was unanimously agreed to approve the extension of the new protocol force-wide with effect from 1.1.2013.

Trish Thomas

FUNDING OF NEWSLETTER

This Newsletter has been funded by David O'Grady of Derby (Independent Business Advisor to SOBS) in memory of his parents James and Geraldine O'Grady of York who sadly died during the past year.

A big thank you to David and Rhona for all your support and help.

If a group or individual would like to sponsor a newsletter edition, then please contact the national office telephone number 0115 944 1117 or email sobs.admin@care4free.net.

THE VIEW FROM MY WINDOW

It is like a little prison as I sit looking at my garden,
So much work needs doing,
Before when I was fit I could do so much,
One day my rose blossomed,
The week that I lost someone special,
It reminded me of how special that person was.

Submitted by Chrissy Irving

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 20th April 2013 A special service for those bereaved through suicide at Norwich Cathedral, for more information contact Trish Thomas on 01452 371 945 or email trishthomas@talktalk.net.

25th – 27th October 2013 Gloucester Retreat 2013. To book contact Trish Thomas on 01452 371 945 or email trishthomas@talktalk.net.

Friday 13th September 2013 Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide Bolton Retreat, for more information contact Janet and Noel on 01942 201 744 or email janet750uk@yahoo.co.uk.

Friday 15th March 2013 Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide Maidstone Retreat, for more information contact Shelia on 01622 751 976 or 07751 522 125, email she.burgman@blueyonder.co.uk.

For any further events that may occur during the year, please visit our website www.uk-sobs.org.uk.

GROUP LEADERS NEEDED

If you have been bereaved by suicide and feel that you can offer help and support to others, why not start a support group in your local area: for more information contact Eric or Christine at the national office, telephone number 0115 944 1117 or email sobs.admin@care4free.net.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all who have kindly donated funds to our organisation.

A donation was made with a special request in memory of Mark McComb, by his loving parents Carol and Alex.

To all Volunteers, once again, a big thank you for supporting and helping all those who have been bereaved by suicide.

Submission of articles, news, events, reflections, etc for consideration for the June 2013 newsletter must reach the editor no later than 1st May 2013. We reserve the right to publish those submissions that seem most relevant and suitable for the newsletter. Submission does not guarantee inclusion. Submissions can be sent via Email to Ann Culley sobs.news@googlemail.com or sobs.admin@care4free.net by post to Ann Culley, Flat, 26, Elizabeth House, Park Lane, Cheam Village, Sutton, Surrey SM3 8BT