

Creative Pathways to Resilience: Restorative Interventions for Children, Adults, and Families Coping with Suicide Bereavement

Beyond the Basics
in Suicide Prevention Conference
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University of Southern Maine
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Pablo Picasso

*"Postvention - Prevention
for the next Generation"*

Edwin Shneidman, 1972



Shneidman, E. (1972). Forward. In A. C. Cain (Ed.), *Survivors of suicide*. Oxford: Charles C. Thomas.

Each person's
grief follows a
unique
trajectory
guided by:

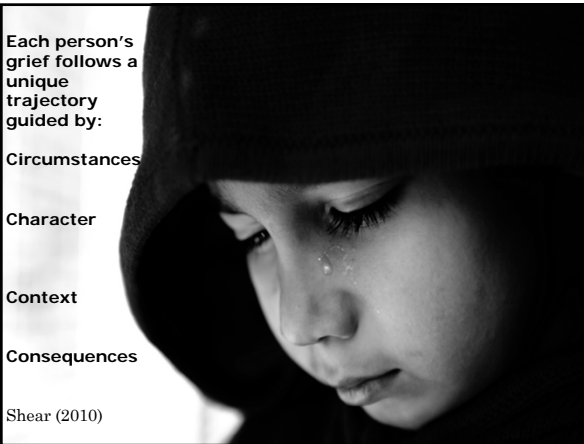
Circumstances

Character

Context

Consequences

Shear (2010)



Calming/ Self-Regulation Practices



When the world becomes a tsunami, I ask how can I dive down to a quiet place where I can gather myself—from which I can surface, survive, and help others thrive. Where are your quiet depths and how do you get there?
~ Parker Palmer

INTENTION

Responding to Suicide Loss
Reactions: Trauma and Grief
Risks and Protective Factors
Reflections on Resilience
Restorative Interventions

Is Suicide Bereavement Different?

Responding to Grief, Trauma, and Distress after a Suicide:

U.S. National Guidelines
Survivors of Suicide Loss Task Force (April, 2015)
Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention



Guidelines for Postvention

<http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/task-force/survivors-suicide-loss>

Postvention responses aim to:

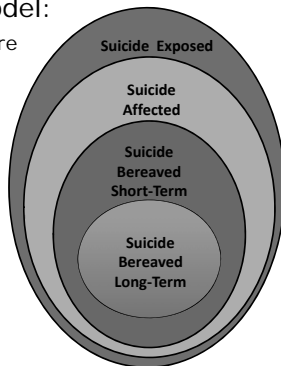
- reduce associated trauma after suicide loss
- provide bereavement support and advocacy for those affected by the suicide

For every life lost to suicide, 6-12 people are affected ~ Edwin Schneidman (1983) *Psychache*

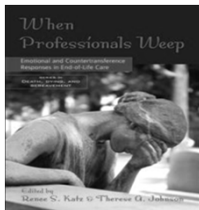
The Continuum Model:

Effects of Suicide Exposure

The exposed would include absolutely anyone whose life or activities in any way intersect with a particular suicide fatality.



Cerel, J., McIntosh, J. L., Nelmeyer, R. A., Maple, M., & Marshall, D. (2014). The continuum of survivorship: Definitional issues in the aftermath of suicide. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 44, 591-600.



Impact on Bereavement Care Providers

Vicarious Trauma

state of tension and preoccupation of the stories trauma experiences described by clients.
~ American Counseling Association

persistent avoidance ←————→ persistent state of arousal

Postvention for Care-Givers

- Attention to self-care
- Support for their own grief
- Education and resources



KEEPER OF THE LIGHT (music, Harvey Reid)

To keep a lamp burning we have to keep putting oil in it
~ Mother Teresa

Postvention Suicide Bereavement ("long-term")

★ Support



★ Safe Expression

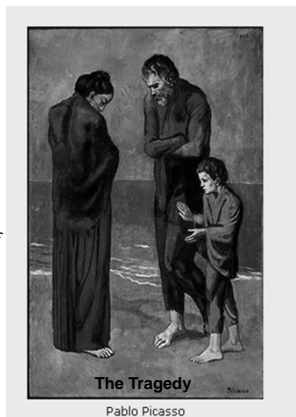
★ Connection




★ Education and Resources

*Common to children
are at least three
concerns:
Did I cause it?
Will I die?
Who will take care of
me?*

~Sandra Bertman, Ph.D, FT





Voices of Suicide Loss

Children write, draw, and talk about what it was like losing a parent to suicide

Red Chocolate Elephants is an invaluable resource. I would have treasured this as a source of comfort after my mother died by suicide.

— Dr. Nancy Rappaport, Assistant Professor, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Director of School Based Programs in Child Psychiatry at the Cambridge Health Alliance

The Journey (International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Film). www.afsp.org

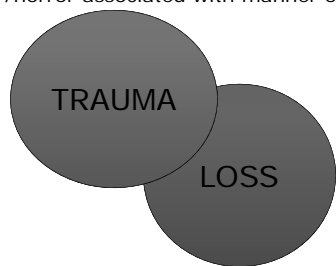
Prominent Themes For Survivors

- WHY? - Making Sense of the Death
- RESPONSIBILITY - Guilt & Blame
- TRAUMA & HELPLESSNESS - Shock & Horror
- ANGER – Rejection and Abandonment
- RELIEF – Freedom from suffering

Jordan & McIntosh (2011) *Grief after Suicide*

Interplay of Trauma and Grief


Traumatic grief involves a '**dual burden**'
Fear/horror associated with manner of death



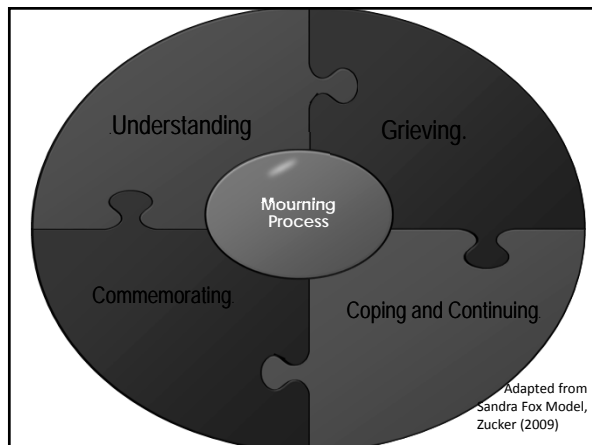
Trauma Reactions

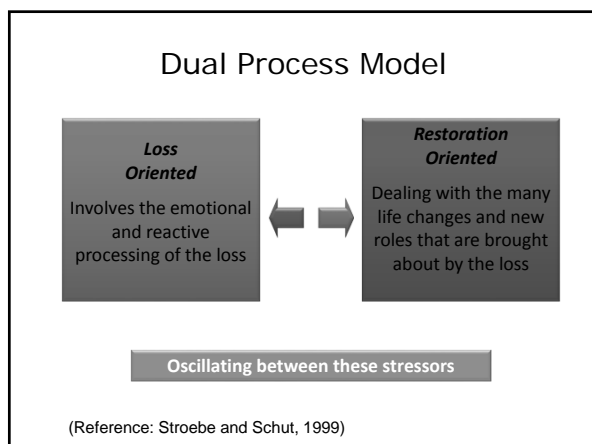
(interfere with normal grieving process)

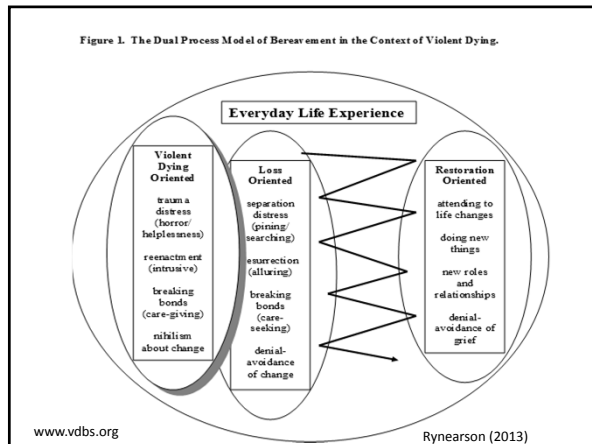
- Intrusive thoughts about the death
- Avoidance and numbing
- Hyperarousal

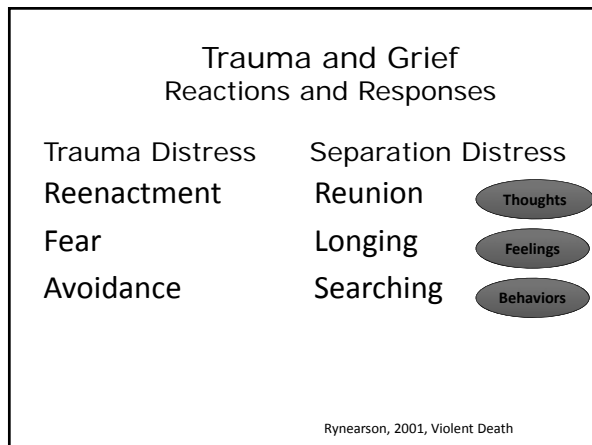


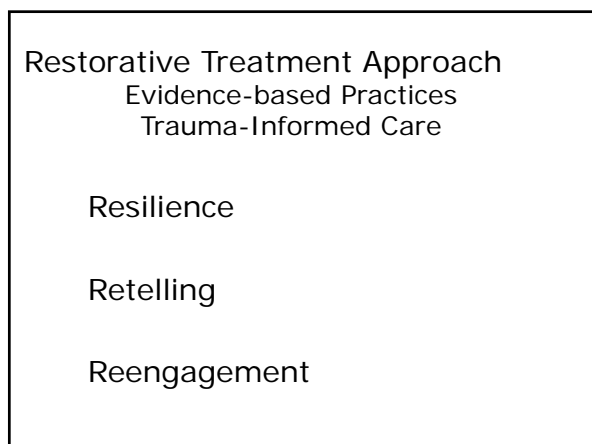
National Child Traumatic Stress Network
www.nctsn.org









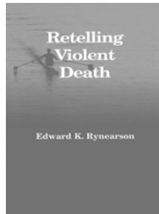




Complicated Grief Treatment

The suffering from extreme grief takes a person away from humanity.

~ M. Katherine Shear, M.D.
Columbia University, School of Social Work



Restorative Retelling

Edward Rynearson, MD
Violent Death Bereavement Society
Seattle, WA

Grief and Trauma Intervention (GTI),
Allison Salloum, Ph.D, LCSW
University of Southern Florida, Tampa

Grief and Trauma
in Children
AN EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT MANUAL



ALLISON SALLOUM



(Feb. 2015)




(2012)

Trauma Model	Restorative Retelling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Safety • Remembrance and Mourning • Reconnection with ordinary life, self, and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress moderation/ psychoeducation • Reconstructive exposure • Meaningful re-engagement
Herman (1997)	Rynearson (2011)

Post Traumatic Growth

- Changed Outlook on Life
 - Purpose- sometimes a new purpose
 - Greater appreciation/gratitude
 - Deeper spirituality/faith
 - Hope
 - Growth



Susan Paradis, *Rise and Shine From My Mommy*

Jordan & McIntosh (2011)

Principles of Restorative Treatment

- ★ Treatment should begin with a thorough review of resilience and risks.
- ★ *Beware the clinician who rushes into your retelling without getting to know you as a person.* (Rynearson, 2001)
- ★ *To use a tool without craftsmanship will be less than artful, potentially harmful.*
R. Neimeyer (ADEC, 2012), *Complicated Bereavement*

Risk Factors



- Circumstances of the death
- Relationship to the deceased
- Previous traumas or deaths
- Prior physical, emotional, or learning problems
- Caregivers who have difficulty adjusting
- Limited or less support from friends, family or other adults
- Negative peer influences
- Additional stresses related to changes after loss and distressing reminders (secondary adversities)

NCTSN Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma Task Force (2012). *The 12 core concepts: Concepts for understanding traumatic stress responses in children and families.*

Protective Factors

- Strong connections to family and community
 - Social/peer support
 - Sense of belonging, sense of identity and good self-esteem
 - Having meaningful forms of expression
 - Skills in problem solving, coping and self-regulation
 - Constructive use of leisure time
 - Positive outlook on life
 - Identification of future goals
 - Sense of control in their lives
 - Easy access to support and professional help if needed.
- (United States Public Health Service, 1999); www.nctsn.org (2012)

One of the key factors in resilience is the capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses (APA, 2011)



In the midst of winter,
I found there was,
within me, an invincible
summer...



...no matter how hard the world pushes
against me, within me, there's something
stronger –
something better,
pushing right back.

~Albert Camus

**Resilience:
The Magical Ingredient**

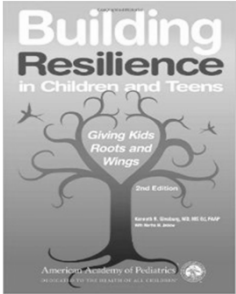
Resilience is the magical ingredient that helps propel someone beyond adverse circumstances to not just surviving but thriving...

~ International Resilience Research Project (2013)

7 C's

Competence
Confidence
Connection
Character
Contribution
Coping
Control

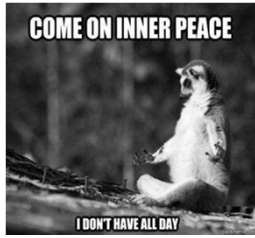
Ginsburg (2011)



**Fostering Resilience:
5 Broad Principles**

- Promote a sense of safety
- Promote calming, ability to self-regulate
- Promote a sense of self- and collective efficacy
- Promote connectedness
- Promote hope

Masten (2011)



Research consistently shows that self-regulation skill is necessary for reliable emotional well being.

Grief reactions (“griefbursts”) can hit hard unexpectedly

STUG:

Sudden
Temporary
Upsurge of
Grief

~adapted from Theresa Rando, Ph.D

Predict
Prepare
Permission
Practice

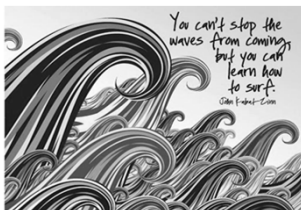
~ adapted from NCTSN.org



Loss reminders
Change reminders
Trauma reminders



A strong emotion can be like a storm and when a storm is about to arrive, we should prepare so we can cope with it
(THE RESILIENCY PROJECT)

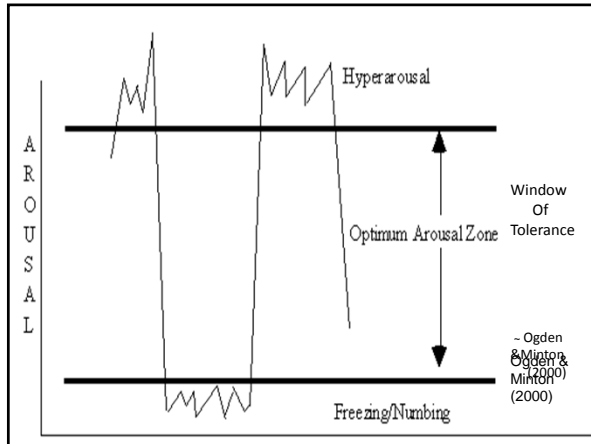


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=11&v=RVA2N6tX2cg>

“Just Breathe”, Julie Bayer & Josh Salzman (children talking about how their emotions affect the brain and ways to they calm themselves

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DD-lFP1FBfk>

Daniel Siegel, MD re: explaining the “upstairs/downstairs” brain to children and how to avoid “flipping your lid”



Calming Ideas For All Ages

Healing Potential of the Arts “aesthetic distance”

Throughout history the arts have embodied the value of controlled emotional expression. Art can fully evoke emotion while, at the same time, preventing emotion from raging free and wreaking havoc of which we know it to be capable.

~Joan Erikson, *The Arts as Healing*

ESSENCE

Emotional
Sparks
Social
Engagement
Novelty
Creative
Exploration



Thriving *despite* context-
surpasses resilience
post traumatic growth
(Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995)

Siegel (2013)

Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT)

Befriending the Body (mind/body wellness)

- Body as Resource
- Body as Instrument of Expression
- Body as Safe Place

I had forgotten that my body was also a sanctuary, a haven.

~ DMT participant

Psychodramatic Methods

Surplus reality, "realm of the imagination"

Social Atom

Creation of Safe Place, Pool of Resources

Imaginal Conversations:

Dialogue with "empty chair"

Dialogue with a quality, feeling, resource

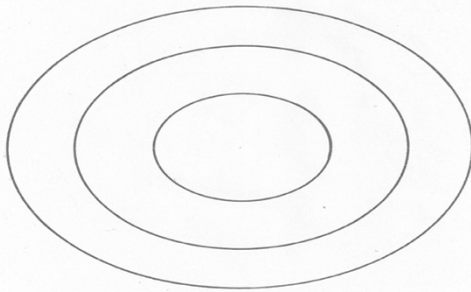
Role play (dreams, wishes, memories)

Future Projection

Blatner, 1996 *Acting In*

Social Atom:

Assessment of Supports/Resources



Resources: Social Atom

- Who is in your inner circle?
 - Who are your safe, support persons?
 - What has helped you in the past when feeling sad, angry, lonely...etc?
 - What do you need to help you through this?
 - What would each of these supports say you needed now?
- (Effective as a role play/sculpture/drawing)

Images as Prompts

Lament, Kathe Kollwitz



There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.

~Maya Angelou



Collateral Damage: Images of Those Left Behind by Suicide," will be a book of portraits, a website and gallery exhibition, telling the stories of people who have lost loved ones through suicide
~ Scott Chisholm

www.leftbehindbysuicide.org

Isle of Grief Map



To request a copy, contact:
Tony M. Grace, MA, LPCC,
Social Work PhD student
Academic Advisor
UK College of Nursing
E-Mail:
"Grace, Anthony"
<tonymgrace@uky.edu>

Healing Power of Stories



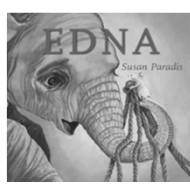
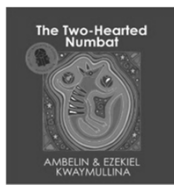
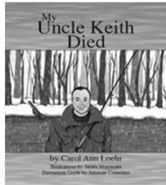
Image from
My Mommy
by Susan Paradis

*All sorrows can be born if you tell a story
about them*
~ Isak Dinesen



"Books are many things:
lullabies for the weary,
ointment for the wounded,
armour for the fearful and
nests for those in need
of a home."

- Glenda Millard.





*Our journeys are carved on paths
unpaved;
When we stumble during our frailest
moments,
may we never, never forget... to look up
and notice:
Our path is tightly woven with several
others by our side.
This may be the struggle, but with
support
We, too, survive.
~ JCL
(teen poem after suicide loss of father)*

THANK YOU!

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