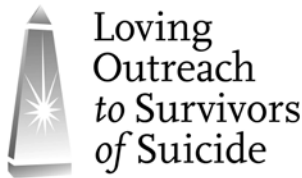


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The LOSS Program
Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
721 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654
(312) 655-7283
catholiccharities.net/loss

Finding the Courage to Share

Maria Sallese

Over the last few days, I’ve noticed many loss survivors have been posting their thoughts about suicide prevention campaigns on the Alliance of Hope forum. Their posts took me back to what I experienced after the death of my son, Mario, in 2019.

Mario ended his life in February. It’s difficult to describe the shock and devastation that followed in the early days and months. The emptiness and pain, so deep, left me void of emotion and full of self-doubt.

Seven months later, when September/Suicide Prevention Month arrived, I experienced something I will never forget. I was out running errands when I spotted a banner draped along the guardrail as I entered a busy intersection in my hometown.

It read, “Suicide is Preventable.”

My immediate thoughts were, “That must be true. They can’t put that out there if it’s not true.”

I was the first car stopped at the four-way light, and in a surreal moment, felt as though all eyes in the cars around me were looking at those words and then looking at me, as if to say, “Why couldn’t you?”

Almost in an instant, all the things I’d been thinking—the blame and feelings of inadequacy that I’d been placing upon myself—all

these things seemed to be public knowledge. I failed to protect my child, and everyone knew my secret.

I tried to hide behind the steering wheel but couldn’t sink low enough in my seat.

It was a year later that I encountered the phrase “Suicide is Complicated” on the Alliance of Hope forum. I saw that other loss survivors were posting messages in a forum called: “Rethinking Suicide Prevention.” In a strange way, it comforted me to know I wasn’t the only person struggling with so many mixed emotions—and it let me feel safe to share my thoughts.

For the first time, I wrote what I believed:

“Sometimes suicide is preventable, and sometimes it is not. As inadequate as it makes me feel, the sad truth is that I don’t believe my son’s suicide was preventable. I don’t think my hindsight knowledge of certain warning signs would have made a difference. I truly believe for him it was more a matter of when, not if.”

“Sometimes suicide is preventable, and sometimes it is not.”

OBELISK

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Archdiocese of Chicago

Catholic Charities partners with mission-driven people and organizations across Cook and Lake Counties to witness a message of mercy and hope to a world in need. We are called to serve and accompany anyone, regardless of their faith, gender, race, or ethnicity.

@ccofchicago     

Memorial Squares *and* Lifekeeper Quilts

Over the decades, LOSS members have created quilt squares that have been sewn into 24 memorial quilts. In each issue, we print the names of those who are memorialized on two of the LOSS Lifekeeper Quilts. We also display quilts at LOSS special events, including the Blossoms of Hope Brunch in April and the Evening of Remembrance in November. We encourage LOSS members to consider creating a quilt square.

We are displaying Lifekeeper Quilts in the St. Louise de Marillac Chapel at the Catholic Charities central office at 721 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60654.

Currently on Display at Catholic Charities: Quilt #19

Ryan Pierce Baas	1/19/1981	12/17/1998
William Durso	3/14/1964	4/14/1996
Karen Kriepke	12/2/1950	12/29/1985
Kathie LaPierre	12/1/1958	6/5/1985
Natalie Gillett	1980	2003
Richard H. Osowski	6/23/1954	12/11/2002
Donald R. Land	12/29/1966	9/29/2003
Vivian A. Huska	12/1961	12/2001
Adrienne Leslie	3/12/1943	1/9/1991
Phillip M. Fricano	12/20/1960	12/20/1997
Sylvester "Colie" Seng	1/25/1919	6/13/1992
Stevens Merena	5/3/1939	10/4/1995
David Michael Ruhl	1964	1994
Joe Westphal	12/13/1962	1/4/1997
Kent John Schmitt	8/19/1964	3/4/1995
Gerry "Skates" Buehler	1955	1998
Vivian A. Huska	12/1961	12/2001
Kevin Hulsman	2/7/1953	6/15/2000
Denesé Anne Gendron	6/15/1953	1/9/2003

Quilt #7

Jerry Bradley	7/12/61	11/25/94
James T. Brannigan	12/28/28	12/12/92
Guy Clemens	8/12/61	7/5/85
James Collins Clark	3/26/68	12/13/89
Kenneth John Frasher	8/24/67	10/28/97
Arnold Jones	1/3/45	8/1/87
Richard A. Kohler	4/21/57	6/6/94
Jeremy Lake	11/14/60	4/3/88
Danny Lasch	1/4/63	7/10/89
Diane Kay Marcus Roy	1/12/44	8/22/95
Steve Merena	5/3/39	10/4/95
Bartholomew M. O'Hara	2/10/74	2/10/93
Ben Parker	10/14/31	8/14/94
Steven M. Pasquerelli	5/11/59	11/3/97
Robert Reich	3/29/38	1/29/96
Ricky Scott	10/2/65	6/25/85
Joseph Christian Westphal	12/13/62	1/4/97
Joe Westphal	12/13/62	1/4/97

Quilt Square Guidelines

Cut a piece of material (heavy cotton materials suggested) to a 12" X 12" square. You can be as creative as you like (many people add pictures and messages). Leave 1" X 1" along the sides so the squares can be sewn together. When finished, mail your quilt square to: LOSS Quilt Project, c/o Catholic Charities, 721 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60654.

Finding the Courage to Share | continued from page 1

There it was. I said it. What I'd carried for so long as my horrible truth was met with compassion and understanding.

“There are always two sides to every conversation, and as a loss survivor, I believe it helps tremendously to engage in both.

The following September, I submitted an article to my local newspaper in an effort to share the mixed emotions that loss survivors feel. I don't believe I would have had the courage to do that had it not been for the safe place I found at the Alliance of Hope.

There are always two sides to every conversation, and as a loss survivor, I believe it helps tremendously to engage in both.

Mine is only one of many stories, but the common thread, and the message I now know to be true, is that suicide is complicated. Sometimes it is preventable, and sometimes it is not. Sometimes there are signs, and sometimes there aren't.

And whether there are signs or no signs, whether there is mental illness or no mental illness, we are all blindsided, and we are all devastated by the loss.



Maria Salles lost her 26-year-old son to suicide in 2019. Through writing, she finds hope and healing and shares her words in the hope of helping others on their own journeys.

Originally published on the Alliance of Hope forum in August 2023 and reprinted with permission from the author.

At the Market

By Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Now when I walk through the market
 I think of how someone else here
 beside the stir-fry cart and the tie-dye tent
 has just lost a beloved
 and is hiding tears behind sunglasses.
 Not knowing who they are,
 I try to treat everyone with kindness.
 Meanwhile the day is beautiful
 for everyone, no matter how whole,
 how broken our hearts. It gathers us all
 in a grand blue embrace.
 I stroll through the gift of a Friday
 morning surrounded by arugula
 and strawberries, muffins, lilies,
 and all these other fragile hearts,
 all of us saying *Excuse me, Good morning,*
How are you, It's nice to see you today.

Reprinted with permission of the author, Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer (2024). *The Unfolding*. Published by Wildhouse Poetry, an imprint of Wildhouse Publishing (www.wildhousepublishing.com)



blossoms of hope brunch

Benefiting the
Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) Program

Thank you to all of our LOSS members and friends of LOSS for your support of the Blossoms of Hope brunch event on April 27, 2025. We thank you for your participation, generosity, and ongoing support of the LOSS Program. A very special thank you goes to the outstanding Blossoms of Hope Brunch Committee and the Catholic Charities Institutional Advancement team, without whom this event would never have been possible. We look forward to seeing you all next year!

2026 Blossoms of Hope Brunch
Sunday, April 26, 2026



From the Desk of
Father Charles T. Rubey

In May, our country celebrates Mother’s Day, which is a day when we honor our mothers who are still here and fondly remember those mothers who are a part of the hereafter. For those mothers who are grieving the death of a child from suicide, or those children who are grieving the loss of a mother from suicide, this is an especially painful day. It is a day when families go out for brunch to honor mothers and do something special for the mothers in our lives. The day is fraught with a lot of pain for grief-stricken people who are painfully reminded that a special person is absent from these festivities. There is a missing card or a card that can’t be given to a missing mother. This is a day that grieving people would like to have stricken from the calendar. Unfortunately, that won’t happen.

One of the most challenging aspects of the grief journey is the confusion that engulfs survivors. One of the most overwhelming feelings for those mothers who are grieving the loss of a child, or for those children grieving the loss of a mother from suicide, is the fact that this person was loved so very much and so deeply. The question is asked: Wasn’t this love enough for this person? The answer to that question is that suicide in no way reflects the level of love that survivors had for this person. Suicide is all about the excruciating pain that this person was in—either the mother or the child. The tremendous love that was felt toward this person was incapable of penetrating the soul and psyche of the hurt person. That is very confusing to the survivor because much has been written about the force of the love that

exists between a mother and her child. Human love is incapable of solving or eliminating the pain of mental illness. It is vitally important for all survivors to realize that the love that we have for people is very limited and is incapable of making other people happy. Our love for people lacks the ability to create happiness in another person. Happiness and contentment emanate from within the soul of each of us. External forces are able to enhance or increase happiness. For example, possessions can enhance happiness in a person, but these possessions cannot make people happy.

“One of the most challenging aspects of the grief journey is the confusion that engulfs survivors.”

Another aspect of confusion for the grieving person is the attempt that people make to alleviate the pain of grief. In the beginning of the journey, there are no words or actions that can help those grieving people or spare them from this pain. Those people who reach out to the grief-stricken survivor feel very helpless because there are no words or actions that can make the grieving person feel better. What can those people do or say that will comfort survivors and ease their pain? My suggestion is that people can be there for the survivors. There is no magical balm that can be applied and make the person feel better. In the immediate aftermath of a suicide, survivors need to first of all absorb the enormity of what has happened. A person who was a vital part in the

life of a family has died very suddenly and has ended their life deliberately. It takes some time to absorb just what happened and why. In the immediate aftermath of the suicide, survivors seek answers to many questions. Sometimes there are answers and sometimes there are no answers. The big question is: Why?

Confusion is a major part of the initial reaction to suicide. How will the survivors continue to go on with their lives? What kind of a future will the survivors have without this person? Can survivors live without this person who was so loved and important in their lives? Will I ever be happy again or experience peace of mind? These are just some of the questions that survivors ask themselves. There are myriad questions that survivors ask themselves in the immediate aftermath of a suicide. These questions confuse survivors as they seek answers. These questions are all part of the initial reaction to the completed suicide of a loved one. Unfortunately, there are not always answers to these questions.

“My suggestion is that people can be there for the survivors. There is no magical balm that can be applied and make the person feel better. In the immediate aftermath of a suicide, survivors need to first of all absorb the enormity of what has happened.”

From the Desk of Father Charles T. Rubey | continued from page 4

In the immediate aftermath of a completed suicide, survivors are on automatic pilot and moving about and thinking in ways that don't always make sense. This is all part of the confusion that has become a part of the life of the survivor. It will not always be this way. As survivors traverse the journey of grief, the fog will lift, and the confusion will subside as survivors regain a semblance of normalcy in their lives. A suicide completely throws survivors into a world of topsy-turvy. Survivors literally don't know what is going on. All of this does subside after the initial aftermath but confusion and the uncertainty of life around them impact the survivor to no end. But it does end, as life continues and takes on a more normal aspect.


“As survivors traverse the journey of grief, the fog will lift, and the confusion will subside as survivors regain a semblance of normalcy in their lives.”

In many instances, mothers provide balance in a home. This is not meant to denigrate the role of the father in a home, but the mother seems to provide calmness and stability to the home. When the mother is impaired by the grief of a suicide, or the mother

has died from suicide, the whole system of the family has been altered and there is a sense of confusion that descends on those remaining members of the family. Members of the family are called to rise to the occasion and make the necessary changes for the smooth running of the family system. All are asked to make the adjustment so that the family system can continue to function as normally as possible. The fog that engulfs a family after a suicide, and the confusion that descends upon a family, will eventually subside, but in the immediate aftermath of the suicide, fog and confusion will be a part of the life of survivors. This is very normal.

As we gather with our families this Mother's Day, let us especially remember those mothers who are grieving the loss of one of their children from suicide, or remember those families who are grieving the loss of a mother or grandmother from suicide. I encourage all our LOSS family members to remember each other in thought and prayer—especially for those members who have recently joined our family.

Keep on Keepin' On,



Pastoral Support

Father Rubey is available to say home Masses, perform blessings, offer prayers and provide counsel around questions of faith following a suicide loss.

Contact loss@catholiccharities.net or call (312) 655-7283 to learn more.

Announcements

LOSS Program 8-Week Groups

LOSS offers 8-week groups on a rolling basis throughout the year. These closed groups allow the same group of individuals an opportunity to meet with one another for 8 consecutive weeks. Readings and other resources are provided. **If you would like to join the waiting list for an upcoming 8-week group or would like any additional information, please contact us at loss@catholiccharities.net or (312) 655-7283.**

Writing Group for Newly Bereaved with Sharon Bibro, LCSW

Writing about your grief is an excellent way to process your emotional response to loss. All you need is paper and pencil. We encourage all types of writing: journaling, freestyle, poetry, and any other form you like. This can be a meaningful addition to counseling and other LOSS groups. If you are interested, please contact LOSS at loss@catholiccharities.net or (312) 655-7283.

Men Are Suicide Survivors (MASS) Men's Group

MASS is for men who have lost a family member or friend to suicide. We offer a confidential setting to talk about your experiences and learn how others have dealt with similar situations. The next meeting is May 19, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest. To register, contact Bill Teskoski at wteskoski@sbcglobal.net or (312) 560-3119.

STAR Group for First Responder Families

STAR is for family members of police officers and firefighters who have died by suicide. You will be in the company of other first responder families who understand the unique stress faced by your loved one. To receive the Zoom link or for more information, contact Alicja Bochenek-Schultz at abochenek@catholiccharities.net or (773) 739-4341.

From the Desk of
Cynthia Waderlow, MSE, LCSW

Strengthening your child's inner resources for coping with suicide

It can seem that literature and advice about grieving children are about only one kind of child—one who has your attention, can be comforted by your explanations about suicide, and believes you when you assure that life going forward will be all right because of the love that endures. Of course, there are young people who react symptomatically to stress to begin with and for whom grief shows up in problematic behavior.

We know that children who have tragically lost loved ones, many of them recover over time from loss and move satisfactorily through expected developmental stages. But let us admit that not all children and youth respond flexibly to profound loss or to the trauma experienced by parents following a suicide in the family. As clinicians, we see bereaved children who struggle with perfectionism, obsessive thinking or unmanaged intense emotions, while others withhold feelings. They may have school or social problems, divorce, or family conflict as a background. Others have pre-existing diagnoses, such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, depression, or anxiety. Since grief is processed at one's developmental level, where skills are mastered, we want to strengthen each child's unique, inner resources for coping in the context of other challenges or diagnoses that may complicate their grief response. Taking a comprehensive perspective, we will want to ameliorate the impact of one problem on another.

“Since grief is processed at one's developmental level, where skills are mastered, we want to strengthen each child's unique, inner resources for coping in the context of other challenges or diagnoses that may complicate their grief response.”

Parents will need to decide who provides treatment, whether that be a professional who already has a history with the child, a specialized grief therapist, or both. Suicide grief is different because causality naturally becomes part of an internal narrative, and young people may form distorted explanations about their loved one's suicide. School-age children may feel responsible for the death, experience shame regarding the lack of an intact family, or feel social stigma around their loved one's suicide. They may also distance themselves from upheaval around them and appear unaffected or uncaring. Teenage development allows more existential thinking, influencing identity and worldview, which evolve in response to the meaning they make of their life experiences. Adolescence is also the stage when differentiation from parents occurs, and this can become entangled with grief and loss associated with the person who died. Teens may have the sense that the deceased is watching them, and this can influence performance. Under the most stressful circumstances of

bereavement, the goal is to promote self-care, coping, developmentally appropriate resources, parental warmth, as well as examination of the young person's story about the death and relationship with the deceased.

Parents and therapists may need to connect gradually with the child regarding loss, and in a way that respects the child's potential wish to avoid. Parents can take time to do this, despite the importance of keeping the loss conscious and affirmed as a reality. You can model your own grief using regulated emotional expression and engage the child whenever possible. It is OK for children to see parents cry at the same time parents are trying to keep things going as normally as possible.

“It is OK for children to see parents cry at the same time parents are trying to keep things going as normally as possible. We all experience approach-avoidance when a profound loss has changed our lives, but it can feel less threatening when a parent or therapist can calmly hold profound loss as a constant background with designated opportunities to look at it.”

From the Desk of Cynthia Waderlow, MSE, LCSW | continued from page 6

We all experience approach-avoidance when a profound loss has changed our lives, but it can feel less threatening when a parent or therapist can calmly hold profound loss as a constant background with designated opportunities to look at it.

“Grief is narrative. We tell ourselves things about the loss, and the person who died, and how it involves us.”

Keep in mind that when a child loses a parent or sibling, especially to suicide, that child will process intermittently and form an identity around the loss over several years and through multiple developmental stages. The loss isn't going anywhere. We have time for healing intervention, which is likely to be addressed repeatedly at developmental stages going forward. It is not surprising that many children return to therapy as young adults for further processing of a loss that shaped their lives.

A primary goal is to keep children moving developmentally, no matter their development at the time of the loss. In a treatment context, they will be assessed and monitored for developmental and high-risk thoughts and behaviors, with attention to how grief is impacting other symptoms and behaviors. Grief is narrative. We tell ourselves things about the loss, and the person who died, and how it involves us. These are the channels for expression and modification under guidance by a therapist and parents.

In my opinion, it is useful to encourage parents of struggling children to seek out individual or group therapy that can provide a sense of belonging as well as a sense of normalcy. A sudden death provokes shock and disorientation at any age. In response, grief requires processing of thoughts, feelings, and expression. Youth will examine their relationship with the person who died and any conflicts that existed prior to the death. They can examine how they are holding back or expressing feelings around parents. Do they feel responsible for protecting others in the family? What stressors are they experiencing at school? What is the loss impact on OCD, ADHD, anxiety, and other conditions? Over a number of years, I've observed suicide bereaved individuals of diverse ages, personalities, and developmental capacities, many who experienced loss through the lens of a pre-existing condition. They will have known their grief through anxiety or depression that was already impacting their lives and made sense of the suicide in some respect that reflects their world view. Yes, with professional guidance and the bereaved person's dedication, they are likely to move through grief in a way that allows some kind of resolution, fitting with their attachment to the person who died and the way they see the world. Professional guidance can mitigate some of the obstacles to acceptance, while wholly validating the person. Grief is about each griever's unique self.

In closing, look for treatment and support that will assess pre-existing conditions that may pose risk or complicate the grief process for your child. Pre-existing conditions set a context for your child's grief experience. For all ages and stages, grief looks for truth, and that can be carefully processed or assigned as meaning or belief. A therapist will follow every trail to be examined according to the child's needs, including feeling safe to express anger, or values that differ from the deceased or others in the family.

“Grief is about each griever's unique self.”

When this is encouraged, grief can be resolved in love and be less influenced by pre-existing depression or anxiety.

Children and teens who are already struggling with aggression, perfectionism, defiance, resentment, fear, avoidance, and negative thinking, will demonstrate a grief that may look like these things. Good therapy is keen on attention to how disordered behaviors and perspectives overlap with the grief process. We can allow quiet, steady reflection in their presence. We may offer alternative interpretations of the suicide and share our own vulnerable emotions. We will tease through possibilities to be considered. We will allow time and create a safe space to access love, longing, and sorrow, the heart of grief.

LOSS Support Group Update

Our in-person groups are held in the following locations: **Downtown Chicago** (721 N. LaSalle Street, 7th Floor), **Marist High School in Chicago** (4200 W. 115th Street), **St. Joseph's Church in Wilmette** (1747 Lake Avenue), **St. Francis de Sales Church in Lake Zurich** (135 South Buesching Road), **St. Joan of Arc Church** (820 Division Street, Lisle), **St. John the Evangelist Church Narthex** (10701 Olcott Avenue, St. John, Indiana).

May 2025 Meetings

In-Person

1st Thursday Group

May 1, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 St. John the Evangelist,
 St. John, Indiana
 Group meets in Church
 Narthex
 Facilitators: Steve Costa,
 Jim and Kris Kazmierczak

2nd Monday Group

May 12, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 Downtown Chicago
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Kerry Hamill and
 Lori Grennon

3rd Wednesday Group

May 21, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 St. Francis de Sales,
 Lake Zurich
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Sandy Bourseau
 and Tish Guinter

3rd Thursday Group

May 15, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
 St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
 Clinician: Mary Novak
 Facilitator: Kathleen Sergent

4th Sunday Group

May 25, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitators: Marion Kahle and
 Merle Cowin

4th Tuesday Group

May 27, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 Marist High School, Chicago
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitators: Lance Beigh and
 Barb Murphy

Online

2nd Tuesday Group

May 13, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Jim and Tina Kranz

3rd Tuesday Group

May 20, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Cherie Emling
 and Tish Guinter

Special Interest

Spousal Loss Group

2nd Wednesday
 May 14, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 Clinician: Cheryl Joseph-Lukz
 Facilitators: Keith Kozer and
 Kris McClure

Parent Support Group

3rd Thursday
 May 15, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Kristen Coe and
 Lori Grennon

Spanish-Speaking Group

2nd Tuesday
 May 13, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Victor Alvarez
 Facilitator: Yolanda DeLeon

STAR Group for first responder families

1st Tuesday
 May 6, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 Clinician:
 Alicja Bochenek-Schultz
 Facilitators: Lori Grennon and
 Tish Guinter

June 2025 Meetings

In-Person

1st Thursday Group

June 5, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 St. John the Evangelist, St.
 John, Indiana
 Facilitators: Steve Costa,
 Jim and Kris Kazmierczak

2nd Monday Group

June 9, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 Downtown Chicago
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators:
 Jeff and Reeny Linstrom

4th Tuesday Group

June 24, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 Marist High School, Chicago
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitators: Anne Marie
 Leofanti and Lance Beigh

3rd Wednesday Group

June 18, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 St. Francis de Sales,
 Lake Zurich
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Sandy Bourseau
 and Tish Guinter

3rd Thursday Group

June 12, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
****Holiday schedule**
 St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
 Clinician: Mary Novak
 Facilitator: Kathleen Sergent

4th Sunday Group

June 22, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitators: Lutfi Alkaddour
 and Lori Grennon

Online

2nd Tuesday Group

June 10, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Jim and Tina Kranz

3rd Tuesday Group

June 17, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitator: Cherie Emling

Special Interest

Spousal Loss Group

2nd Wednesday
 June 11, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
 Clinician: Cheryl Joseph-Lukz
 Facilitators: Gina Petit and
 Yvonne Papciak

Spanish-Speaking Group

2nd Tuesday
 June 10, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Victor Alvarez
 Facilitator: Yolanda De Leon

Parent Support Group

3rd Thursday
 June 19, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitators: Jim and Tina Kranz

STAR Group for first responder families

1st Tuesday
 June 3, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
 Clinician:
 Alicja Bochenek-Schultz
 Facilitators:
 Tish Guinter and Lori Grennon

Upcoming July 2025 Meetings

In Person

1st Thursday Group

July 10, 2025; 7:00 p.m.

**Holiday Schedule

St. John the Evangelist, St. John, Indiana

2nd Monday Group

July 14, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Downtown Chicago

3rd Wednesday Group

July 16, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Francis de Sales,
Lake Zurich

3rd Thursday Group

July 17, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
St. Joan of Arc Church, Lisle

4th Tuesday Group

July 22, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Marist High School, Chicago

4th Sunday Group

July 27, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette

Online

2nd Tuesday Group

July 8, 2025; 7:00 p.m.

3rd Tuesday Group

July 15, 2025; 6:00 p.m.

Special Interest

Spousal Loss Group

2nd Wednesday
July 9, 2025; 7:00 p.m.

Parent Support Group

3rd Thursday
July 17, 2025; 6:30 p.m.

Spanish-Speaking Group

2nd Tuesday
July 8, 2025; 5:00 p.m.

STAR Group for first responder families

1st Tuesday
July 1, 2025; 6:00 p.m.

A Prayer for Survivors

—Therese Gump

Lord, I need your help to survive,

A part of me's gone, but I'm still alive.

Let me not be obsessed with "if onlys" and "whys"

Only you know the reason that somebody dies.

I must take time to weep, and smile when I can,
And not be concerned with the judgments of man.

Can I learn how to numb the everyday pain,

So the hollow inside me will not remain?

May I substitute goals for my feelings of guilt,

And not be ashamed of the life I have built.

Make me believe that the sadness will pass,

That joy will return to my being at last.

Finally, show me the way to reach others like me.

Then I'll know my survival was destined to be.

To register for any group or event, call (312) 655-7283 or email loss@catholiccharities.net

LOSS WEATHER LINE

In case of severe weather, please call the LOSS weather line to ensure that meetings will be held as scheduled.

(312) 948-7902



*The Obelisk Publishing Fund
in Memory of
Michael Jon Weber*



Mention My Name

Robert Joseph Wertz
6/24/1989 – 5/18/2007

*Almost 18 when you left, now gone 18 years.
Unbelievable, really—
Loved and missed by all.
Mom*

Michael Jon Weber
9/1/1979 – 6/28/2018

*In memory of a beloved son and brother.
Deeply loved and missed every day.
I hug you in my heart.
Mom*

Jeff Kramer
5/3/1990 – 6/10/2024

*Fearless, smart, compassionate, funny,
empathetic, genuine.
Loved by many. You showed me what true love is.
My calm, my home.
I'd stay forever with you.
Love, Staci*

Anthony Keane
11/20/1987 – 3/10/2021

*We miss you always.
4 Musketeers*

Mention My Name submission form

Survivors need to be able to hear, see, and speak the names of the persons they have lost. To ensure your request is included, please send your submission at least two months before publication. Late submission will automatically be included in the next edition unless otherwise indicated. We always do our best to accommodate your request.

Mail your submission to: LOSS Program Catholic Charities, 721 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60654

(Allow two months for publishing.) *A donation of any size is appreciated to defray the cost of printing and postage.*

Name of loved one

Date of birth

Date of death

Month requested

Requested by

Relationship

Share your message below. Please limit to 20 words or less; longer messages may be edited as space is limited.

Obelisk Dedication Fund

To ensure continued publication, we have established an Obelisk Fund, which enables LOSS members to assist with the expenses of this newsletter. **There are three ways in which to contribute to our fund:**

1. Dedication of one month's Obelisk: To dedicate a specific month to your loved one, a family may contribute \$2,560, which will cover the total cost of that month's newsletter. Please send this form back with your donation and the name of your loved one, as well as the month you are requesting. Please add a second month choice as sometimes we have more than one member requesting the same month.

I would like to contribute \$_____ in memory of _____.

For the month of _____ or _____.

2. Postage: To make a donation to cover one month's postage, we ask that you send a minimum contribution of \$300. There will be a special section for those who contribute to our postage fund, and your loved one's name will also be on the Mention My Name page.

I would like to contribute \$_____ to cover one month's postage

in memory of _____.

3. Publishing Fund: To be listed as a donor for our publishing fund, a member may contribute any amount to the Obelisk Publishing Fund and have your name listed as a donor. Your loved one's name will appear on the Mention My Name page as well.

I would like to contribute \$_____ to the Obelisk Publishing Fund

in memory of _____.

Your name: _____

Name of your loved one: _____

Date of birth: _____ Date of death: _____ *Note: Please fill out for the Mention My Name page*

Check here if you wish your donation to remain anonymous

Make checks payable to **Catholic Charities LOSS Program**. All donations to the LOSS Program are tax deductible.

Mail to LOSS Program, 721 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60654



LOSS Program/Area 281
721 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654

POSTMASTER:
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY



Why the Obelisk?

The Obelisk was chosen as a symbol for the LOSS Program to describe the grief process. The symbol came from the definition of an obelisk: a solid upright four-sided pillar gradually tapering as it rises. The original obelisks were erected in Egypt. The monuments were constructed by many people working together to pull a single block of

granite into place. On the sides of the obelisk, writings were carved into the stone, recording battles and victories of great kings; a permanent testimony to the rulers of Egypt in approximately 1400 B.C. The LOSS Obelisk contains the writings of survivors and survivor-related issues. This is a record of our struggles, our battle to survive. It

represents the support that we gain from meeting with other survivors so that we are not alone on our journey of grief. As we gain strength, the grief tapers off. Our spirits rise and we are able to look up again, to have hope for the future.

