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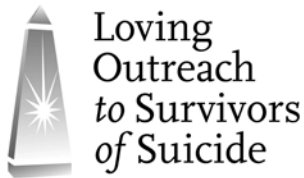
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The LOSS Program
Loving Outreach
to Survivors of Suicide

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

Centering Survivors During National Suicide Prevention Month

Becky Olson

I have written about how difficult and intrusive it feels to see suicide prevention campaigns in public. The desire to reframe these messages resonated with a lot of people, so I want to elaborate on some things I hope others will keep in mind when sharing suicide awareness content this month.

The factors that contribute to dying from suicide are exceptionally complex.

Before my dad died, I considered myself to be somewhat of an expert in suicide prevention. After losing two people in my life years before, I had attended workshops and read about suicide risk factors to the point where I felt confident in my ability to identify warning signs in my friends and colleagues. Then, in 2017, my dad died from suicide, and I was shocked and confused. How had I missed this?

That question was a prevailing theme in my grief group. As we shared the sudden losses of our parents, children, and siblings, our facilitator pointed us to current research, which shows that it is incredibly difficult to identify those who are at risk of dying from suicide.

Influences include a messy web of anxiety, depression, external stresses, genetics, previous injuries, and/or addiction — and the way people manage these factors varies greatly depending on their life experiences, health history, and access to support systems. Even when we’re able to pinpoint some of the risks, they are not accurate predictors because those who exhibit suicidal signs do not always die from suicide.

I fully support campaigns that normalize depression and encourage us to seek support, but I think we need to stress that suicide is an incredibly complicated subject, and these deaths are not caused by a single, preventable factor.

I fully support campaigns that normalize depression and encourage us to seek support, but I think we need to stress that suicide is an incredibly complicated subject, and these deaths are not caused by a single, preventable factor.

OBELISK

LOSS STAFF

Rev. Charles T. Rubey
Founder & Director

Deborah R. Major
Director

Cynthia Waderlow
Child Therapist

COUNSELING TEAM

Rev. Charles T. Rubey

Deborah Major

Laraine Bodnar

Sharon Bibro

Mary Novak

Cynthia Waderlow

Michele Nowak

Victor Alvarez

Alicja Bochenek-Schultz

Cheryl Joseph-Lukz

CONTRIBUTORS

Becky Olson

Cheryl Joseph-Lukz

Cynthia Waderlow

EDITOR

Deborah R. Major

ART DESIGN/LAYOUT

Jane Tomlinson



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.



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 #9

John W. Alefirenko	10/24/1954	9/26/1997
Robert Briskey	1/22/1942	5/25/1997
Robert Doornbosch		
Brian John Durakis	8/19/1971	9/13/1989
William A. Durso	3/14/1964	4/14/1996
David Lane Flood	12/28/1962	8/6/1986
Elizabeth Gallagher	10/21/1977	4/30/1994
Dan-o Gogotz	6/28/1981	8/8/1997
Cory A. Grothe	3/18/1978	8/5/1997
Arnold Jones	1/3/1945	8/1/1987
Boris Kilimnik	1/19/1979	5/11/1997
Kathleen LaPierre	12/1/1958	6/5/1985
Dan Lasch	1/4/1963	7/10/1989
Terry Logue	1963	1983
Mari Helen Mannion	6/27/1977	4/30/1994
John McBride	2/9/1956	6/7/1989
David Blair Rothschild	9/23/1954	7/8/1983
Philip J. Saraz	7/29/1962	11/20/1985
Maryann Vann		

Quilt #21

Andrew Joseph Bishop	10/21/1960	5/5/1983
Billy Joyce	10/22/1972	3/10/2001
Steven Alan Teitelbaum	7/6/1957	8/30/2001
Joe Patush	1980	2000
Leo E. McDevitt	9/5/1959	11/6/2003
Michael J. Ross	3/9/1940	3/14/2000
Casi Roach	1976	1996
Paul Roach	1978	1995
Bill Steiner	4/18/1974	5/27/1994
Mark Nolan Lampertz	1977	1995
Vincent T. Shelton	1963	2003
Virgilio Diaz Jr.	2/14/1968	9/30/1989
William Durso	3/14/1964	4/14/1996
Eric Deerwester	12/1/1971	2/26/1995
Gerry Buehler	1955	1998
Adrienne Leslie	3/12/1943	1/9/1991
Ronald Schippnick	9/15/1950	8/28/2000
David Moscinski	4/28/1961	5/16/1995
Natalie Gillett	1980	2003

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.



From the Desk of
Cheryl Joseph-Lukz, M.A., LCPC

‘Don’t just stand there....move.’

A few months back, I was standing in line to board the commuter train on a hot humid morning. While waiting, I watched a mother as she swayed back and forth to the sounds of the station with a baby in her arms. Her companion was collapsing a stroller, in anticipation of the incoming train. I was jolted awake from my meditative stare by a gruff angry voice of the man behind me who said, “Don’t just stand there.... MOVE!” Apologetically, I moved along and boarded the train which had mysteriously rolled in beyond my consciousness. Later that day, the angry tone of the commuter behind me had softened and I thought, “Hmmm, maybe he is onto something.”

As a therapist who companions persons struggling with traumatic grief, I have witnessed the weariness grievers feel in struggling with the long battle of unwanted thoughts and emotions following the suicide death of a loved one. Survivors of suicide loss and survivors of other traumatic experiences are often seeking methods for coping with upsetting thoughts, feelings and memories. Once the initial experiences of shock, acute post-trauma and immobilization have passed, we find that survivors rightfully seek new methods for moving through the pain and grief that will forever be a part of them. Could it be that one such method is the very one commanded to me by the impatient commuter boarding the train? “Don’t just stand there.... MOVE!”

I like to think that motion is lotion for the grieving body, mind and spirit.

I like to think that motion is lotion for the grieving body, mind and spirit. If you think about it, the word, “motion” is right there in the word, “emotion.” I remember reading somewhere that nearly 85% of our communication is non-verbal. With this in mind, we may want to consider adding movement and action-oriented modalities to our healing strategies. Moreover, we know that during periods of trauma, distress, high anxiety, and panic, the verbal language centers in the brain “go offline.” Studies show that some parts of the brain shut down even during the recall of traumatic events, including the verbal centers and the reasoning centers of the brain (Traumatic Stress, Van Der Kolk, 2006). Experts in the field of neuroscience have long told us that trauma not only changes our brains, but it can also change our movement and our interpretation of everyday events. In her book, *Body Aware* (2022), the board-certified dance/movement therapist, Erica Hornthal, LCPC, notes that “without addressing our movement, we leave out a huge piece of the healing puzzle” when confronting trauma and grief experiences. It is my belief that motion can be a powerful tool in processing grief since movement and exercise have the potential for lending physical and mental benefits to the griever. If added to a regular routine, this may help ease the pain and isolation of loss.

Here is why motion may be beneficial in traumatic grief.

Mental clarity: Engaging in physical activity can improve mental clarity and focus, which can be helpful when navigating the emotional complexities of grief.

Physical Release: Movement can help release tension and stress that often accompany grief. It can also trigger the release of endorphins, which have mood-boosting and pain-relieving effects.

Emotional Processing: Actively moving with grief, whether through walking, dancing, or other forms of exercise, can help survivors process their emotions and find a sense of flow and healing.

Finding Resilience: Physical movement during a grief journey can help individuals build resilience and find new ways to cope with loss. This may also allow them to find new people with whom to share their story as the narrator and as the listener, allowing them to move forward while still honoring their grief.

During our monthly support groups in the LOSS Program, I have heard many survivors and facilitators discuss the value of having a friend, neighbor, or group with whom to walk, ride bikes, play basketball or pickleball. At times, this serves as a survivor’s only social outlet. Other examples of movement practices which can be helpful include: Yoga, Tai Chi, bowling, bouncing a ball, using a yo-yo, or other gentle movement exercises. These can be done individually or in a group to release physical tension in the body

Cheryl Joseph-Lukz, M.A, LCPC | continued from page 3

and promote emotional release and rhythmic flow. Walking, running, swimming, hiking, golf, racquet sports, biking, wreck it rage rooms, and weightlifting are activities that allow for both physical exertion, physical space, and mental space to process emotions. Dancing — ballet, tap, hip hop, line-dancing, zumba, and other expressive movements — can be a powerful way to express and process emotions, while “being present” individually, or in a community or class. Another option is Scream Club Chicago which meets weekly on Sundays at 7 p.m. at North Avenue Beach pier to do breathwork and blow off steam. Participants write down something they want to let go of on a piece of biodegradable,

eco-friendly paper, and then do a group countdown to scream out toward Lake Michigan. Find out more at www.thescreamclub.com

I can personally vouch for the healing effects of movement and exercise during loss and setbacks within my own life. I call mine the three T’s: Tai Chi, tap dancing, and tennis. In my experience, even when I find myself not wanting to honor the plans or commitments I’ve made to engage in these exercises, I almost always feel mentally lighter, emotionally grounded and physically stronger after doing so. There is a collective wisdom present in rhythmic movement that informs the healing process. I have adopted a mantra my tennis coach used to use when he

noticed a player was overthinking and underperforming based on nerves, stress, or fear of failure. He would encouragingly say, “Bounce and hit.” That’s all. Bounce and hit: A sort of grounding technique for moments of physical or emotional flooding.

Using movement to heal is valuable for anyone wanting to unpack, release and get in touch with one’s body, mind and spirit in the wake of unspeakable loss. It is important to find exercises and movement practices which feel comfortable, safe and accessible. I urge you to keep an open mind and to not be afraid to try something new, when you feel ready to do so. As you move through your complex and often overwhelming grief journey, consider adding familiar and new-to-you kinds of movement to your healing regimen.

Centering Survivors During National Suicide Prevention Month | continued from page 1

Emphasizing warning signs can exacerbate survivor trauma.

Those of us navigating a recent loss are already fixating on the last days, weeks, and months before our loved one died and scanning our minds for the signs that we may have missed. Suicide awareness campaigns that place further emphasis on that “crucial time period” can further contribute to survivor trauma.

One of the revelations my grief group shared was recognizing that the difficult moments we remembered were not necessarily signs that we missed; rather, they were normal human behaviors that we probably never would have revisited if they were still alive. Sometimes, people contemplate suicide for years but never attempt it. Sometimes, people make one impulsive decision. Some attempt, get better, make additional attempts, and get better, but still eventually die from suicide.

We all have difficult days. Many of us are navigating depression. Suicide prevention campaigns that over-simplify risk factors and reduce them to a list of warning signs that someone may or may not exhibit before ending their life feels insulting, and the implication that a loved one can intervene further contributes to guilt or shame for those of us who were not able to do that.

Prevention is not *always* possible.

I know a lot of survivors find prevention work to be incredibly meaningful, but that is not the right path for me. One of the most comforting things that happened to me after losing my dad to suicide was hearing my therapist say with total honesty and transparency that, if she had met with him, she would have helped him work through his depression in therapy, but likely would have sent him home. He still would have died.

Early detection and intervention are amazing goals, but over 100 people

will die from suicide in the U.S. today alone. In the same way that we are not going to be able to prevent every car accident or treat every cancer, we are not going to be able to prevent every death by suicide. In fact, more people die by suicide than car accidents, and many of those people, like my dad, are kind, and present, and funny, and easy-going, and not exhibiting the warning signs that suicide prevention campaigns typically highlight. Even with the best support efforts in place, preventing suicide as something we can consistently anticipate and prevent is false. And I honestly believe it is harmful to assume that if we are vigilant enough, we will be able to prevent the next one.

This month, instead of being inundated with risk factors and warning signs, I would rather send love, support, comfort, gentleness, and understanding to everyone who is struggling right now.

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I would rather spread the message that feeling depressed is incredibly common, and we should be more forgiving and loving with ourselves and others.

I hope more suicide awareness campaigns will consider the impact prevention language has on those navigating a recent loss. Normalize therapy, medication, and make treatment more accessible, but do not over-simplify the risks or solutions. Survivors carry too much guilt, and if our love could have saved them, it would have.

This article first appeared on the Our Side of Suicide Blog and is reprinted with permission. For more information about the author and to read more about her grief journey, visit www.oursideofsuicide.com



Announcements

Out of the Darkness Walk

September 27, 2025,
9:00 a.m.

The Out of the Darkness Chicagoland

Walk is a journey of remembrance, hope, and support for survivors. The

3-mile walk begins at Montrose Harbor in Chicago. You can participate solo or as part of a team. This event is an opportunity to meet other survivors and to acknowledge the ways in which suicide and mental health conditions have affected our lives and the lives of those we love. Visit afsp.chicagowalk.org for more information.



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Save-the-date: LOSS Evening of Remembrance

November 3, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

Our annual Evening of Remembrance at St. John of the Cross Catholic Church, 5005 Wolf Road, Western Springs, Illinois, brings survivors together for a service of comforting music and readings to honor those we have lost to suicide, followed by a time of sharing and light refreshments. We hope you will join us.

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.

Save-the-Date: International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

November 22, 2025, 11:00 a.m.

The LOSS Program and AFSP Illinois will collaborate to cohost International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day Saturday, November 22, 2025, at 721 N. LaSalle St., Chicago. This is a special annual event where survivors of suicide loss come together to find connection, understanding, and hope through their shared experience. Lunch will be served. For additional information, contact loss@catholiccharities.net

LOSS Memorial to be dedicated at Queen of Heaven Cemetery Hillside, Illinois

Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Chicago will dedicate a special memorial at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Hillside, Illinois, to honor those who have died by suicide and to welcome LOSS survivors. Construction of the site is nearing completion and may be finished by early November. You are invited to attend a special dedication ceremony and to experience the beauty of this memorial space. We will share the date and time of the dedication in our November issue.

LOSS Program 8-Week Groups

LOSS offers 8-week groups on a rolling basis throughout the year. Readings and other resources are provided. Participants are asked to commit to attending all 8 sessions to build and maintain group cohesion. If you would like to join the list for an upcoming 8-week group or want additional information, please contact us at loss@catholiccharities.net or (312) 655-7283.

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.

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 meetings are September 15, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., followed by October 20, 2025, at Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest. To register, contact Bill Teskoski at wteskoski@sbcglobal.net or (312) 560-3119.

Are you looking for a LOSS group for men?

If you have been wishing for a LOSS group to meet with other men who have lost a loved one to suicide but find the distance to the MASS group in Lake Forest too far to travel, please contact LOSS to register your interest. Contact LOSS at loss@catholiccharities.net or (312) 655-7283.

From the Desk of

Cynthia Waderlow, MSE, LCSW

Purpose, Pattern, and Family Chemistry after Loss

I appreciate having been a LOSS therapist for children and youth for 14 years, and to see many of my young clients doing well, graduating, attending college or getting jobs ... attending to the developmental tasks for young adults. These suicide-bereaved children have been through traumatic loss and change, that has impacted relationships with their families, their sense of self, and challenged the path of differentiation from the one who died and the parents who want to hold them closer in the wake of loss. Their developmental evolution is guided by time and unrolls in response to everything surrounding it. There is purpose, pattern, and family chemistry, which exerts a significant influence.

I was recently able to reflect with a mother who lost her oldest son, Patrick, to suicide about 13 years ago. In the ensuing years, both she and her children engaged with me in the intimate work of grief and adjustment. She reminisced about the devastating, long impact of Patrick's death, "a landslide," that she and her husband grieved differently. She shared how her two surviving children, a daughter, 10, and a son, 16, coped and integrated changes in their lives and the family system. Both eventually struggled with whether to go away to college, leaving their parents behind. They did leave and were excellent students. She acknowledged that they have done well but sees "scarring" in the ways they may over-compensate — in her son's strong sense of responsibility and her daughter's dedication to social justice, as well as their vigilance regarding their mother's periods of tearfulness. If she cries during a movie, they show watchfulness and anxiety. There is a consensual sacredness around their deceased brother's birthdate and death anniversary, when other possible events or activities are weighed against the rituals that have developed around these dates. Their mother notices their mood swings, sensitivities, and believes they experience internal pressure to achieve high levels of success and responsibility, to protect her, their own children, to keep life right.

She reflected on how her surviving children provided her with a sense of purpose when the early pain of grief overwhelmed her, as the family required continuing structure, one of the first recommendations for a bereaved family's stability. Work and family life moved forward, even though these did not feel normal.

During this 13-year period, there were other deaths, those of the maternal grandparents, and her deceased son's girlfriend, from cancer. These losses took on larger meaning in the context of her son's death, as they were primary carriers of his memory, leaving the world that he knew and those that knew him, smaller. There were also births of her own grandchildren, who will never know Patrick, but can point to him in a picture and visit with his elderly pet turtle.

What does it mean to survive your sibling, to participate in the reworking of a changed family system? How does your relationship with your parents change as you watch them living with loss? These questions highlight aspects of growing up with suicide loss and navigating the conflicts that present between one's self and another in a highly sensitive environment. The response to loss can lead to early maturation, sacrificing, or caring for a family member, hesitancy to expand into the world, or even rebellion.

Moving forward reduces grief focus for the young. But they are changed and perhaps even angry with hurt, empowerment, awareness, and ideation of what might have been if the loved one had lived. They evolve into new roles, relationships and possibilities, but the "scarring" is also carried forward. Is "marked" a better word? "Imprinted"? This mother honored her children's passages into young adulthood with awareness and clear eyes that they had moved through years of challenge with intention.

I felt gratitude as I sat with this mother, now a dear friend, with tea, fruit, and cheese, so thoughtfully given. I felt the years of our shared grief work, and observed the framed faces on the wall, all cherished. There were imprints everywhere, including the place on the floor where she first wept at the notice of Patrick's death. We both knew that her story was exquisitely unique, yet universal and shared by many. I held the tenderness in her recognition of the scarring or imprints, somehow allowed and settled in at this point. The day was warm. Parents and children, after years of mixed needs, agendas, and challenges in the context of Patrick's seminal loss have relaxed into those changes as they lay like the ground after a landslide with rain, sun, and clouds.

‘At Peace’ Memorial Queen of Heaven Cemetery Hillside, Illinois

This memorial is a result of the collaborative efforts of Catholic Cemeteries of Chicago and the LOSS Program of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Father Charles Rubey began this ministry nearly 50 years ago in recognition of the need to bring comfort to families and friends of those who died by suicide. We believe that this memorial is the first of its kind in the United States. The memorial is designed with the intention of bringing peace and healing to those who have been impacted by suicide. We hope to add additional features in the future, but for now, we are incredibly proud of this memorial that is a reminder of the power of God’s love in our world. You are invited to attend a special dedication ceremony at a date to be determined in November to experience the beauty of this memorial space.

– Bishop Larry Sullivan



When the Ambush Comes

By Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

When the Ambush Comes

You might be standing in line at the bank,
perhaps taking out the trash after midnight,
the moon somehow too bright.

If you can predict the quick tears,
the tight throat, that’s not the ambush.

That’s just grief.

The ambush comes when you’re laughing.
Or when you’re eating popcorn on the couch.

Or when you drive by a parking lot
where once you practiced parallel parking
with the one who is no longer here.

The ambush might come when you’ve just
put on mascara. Or when you’re talking

on the phone to customer service.

Or when you’re dusting the piano
where your loved one once sat
and practiced the theme

to *Pirates of the Caribbean*
over and over and over. And over.

And then you’re crying again.

Not that you mind it.

Not that you’re surprised.

You don’t even apologize anymore.

This is what happens now.

It’s what love looks like. You call it life.

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

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).

September 2025 Meetings

In-Person

- 1st Thursday Group**
September 4, 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**
September 8, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Downtown Chicago
Clinician: Deborah Major
Facilitators: Kerry Hamill and
Cherie Emling
- 3rd Wednesday Group**
September 17, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Francis de Sales,
Lake Zurich
Clinician: Sharon Bibro
Facilitators: Sandy Bourseau
and Tish Guinter
- 3rd Thursday Group**
September 18, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
Clinician: Mary Novak
Facilitators: Kathleen Sergent
and Barry Benecke
- 4th Tuesday Group**
September 23, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Marist High School, Chicago
Clinician: Michele Nowak
Facilitators: Lance Beigh and
Barb Murphy
- 4th Sunday Group**
September 28, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette
Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
Facilitators: Lori Grennon and
Katie Graff

Online

- 2nd Tuesday Group**
September 9, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Clinician: Sharon Bibro
Facilitators: Jim and Tina
Kranz
- 3rd Tuesday Group**
September 16, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Clinician: Sharon Bibro
Facilitators: Cherie Emling
and Tish Guinter

Special Interest

- Spousal Loss Group**
2nd Wednesday
September 10, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Clinician: Cheryl Joseph-Lukz
Facilitator: Kris McClure and
Yvonne Papciak
- Parent Support Group**
3rd Thursday
September 18, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
Clinician: Deborah Major
Facilitators: Jim Lampa and
Lori Grennon
- Spanish-Speaking Group**
2nd Tuesday
September 9, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
Clinician: Victor Alvarez
Facilitator: Yolanda DeLeon

- STAR Group for first responder families**
1st Tuesday
September 2, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Clinician: Alicja Bochenek-Schultz
Facilitators: Lori Grennon and
Tish Guinter

October 2025 Meetings

In-Person

- 1st Thursday Group**
October 2, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
St. John the Evangelist, St.
John, Indiana
Facilitators: Steve Costa,
Jim and Kris Kazmierczak
- 2nd Monday Group**
October 6, 2025**; 6:00 p.m.
****Holiday Schedule**
Downtown Chicago
Clinician: Deborah Major
Facilitators: Lori Grennon
and Kristen Coe
- 4th Tuesday Group**
October 28, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Marist High School, Chicago
Clinician: Michele Nowak
Facilitator: Katy Wertz and
Anne Marie Leofanti
- 3rd Monday Men's Group****
****New MASS Group**
October 20, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Downtown Chicago
Clinician: Mike Fitzgibbon
Facilitators: Jim Kranz and
Bill Teskoski
- 3rd Wednesday Group**
October 15, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Francis de Sales, Lake Zurich
Clinician: Sharon Bibro
Facilitator: Sandy Bourseau
- 3rd Thursday Group**
October 16, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
Clinician: Mary Novak
Facilitators: Kathleen Sergent
and Lance Beigh

- 4th Sunday Group**
October 26, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette
Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
Facilitators: Lori Grennon and
Marion Kahle

Online

- 2nd Tuesday Group**
October 14, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Clinician: Sharon Bibro
Facilitators: Jim and Tina Kranz
- 3rd Tuesday Group**
October 21, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
Facilitator: Cherie Emling and
Tish Guinter
- Special Interest**
- Spousal Group**
2nd Wednesday
October 8, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Clinician: Cheryl Joseph-Lukz
Facilitators: Gina Petit and
Yvonne Papciak
- Spanish-Speaking Group**
2nd Tuesday
October 14, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
Clinician: Victor Alvarez
Facilitator: Yolanda De Leon
- Parent Support Group**
3rd Thursday
October 16, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
Clinician: Michele Nowak
Facilitators: Mark and Mary
Edwards
- STAR Group for first responder families**
1st Tuesday
October 7, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Clinician: Alicja
Bochenek-Schultz
Facilitators: Tish Guinter and
Lori Grennon

Upcoming November 2025 Meetings

In-Person

1st Thursday Group

November 6, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
St. John the Evangelist, St. John, Indiana

2nd Monday Group

November 10, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
Downtown Chicago

3rd Wednesday Group

November 19, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Francis de Sales, Lake Zurich

3rd Thursday Group

November 20, 2025; 6:30 p.m.
St. Joan of Arc Church, Lisle

4th Tuesday Group

November 25, 2025; 7:00 p.m.
Marist High School, Chicago

4th Sunday Group

November 23, 2025; 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette

Online

2nd Tuesday Group

November 11, 2025; 7:00 p.m.

3rd Tuesday Group

November 18, 2025; 6:00 p.m.

Special Interest

Spousal Loss Group

2nd Wednesday
November 12, 2025; 7:00 p.m.

Parent Support Group

3rd Thursday
November 20, 2025; 6:30 p.m.

Spanish-Speaking Group

2nd Tuesday
November 11, 2025; 6:30 p.m.

STAR Group for first responder families

1st Tuesday
November 4, 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



This issue of the Obelisk is dedicated to the memory of
Collin Sean Gillespie



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.

