

FROM OUR READERS Letters to the Editor

People available to help those touched by suicide

Published: November 18, 2010, 12:00 AM
Font Size: A A A A A
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Updated: November 18, 2010, 6:58 AM

Coping with the loss of a loved one is extremely difficult, especially as we approach the holiday season. How can those touched by suicide endure daily life and survive the holiday season?

I am the father of a 17-year-old son who took his own life early this year. My life and the lives of those close to me have been dramatically altered forever. Unfortunately, there are no road maps to help navigate this difficult and painful journey. Surviving suicide by a loved one is not something any individual can or should try to endure in seclusion. The questions are many and may be unanswerable. The guilt is monumental and the profound pain and sadness are beyond description. However, there is hope if you are willing to accept help.

The first step is your choice and your responsibility. As challenging as you might think the situation is, speak openly and honestly with family and friends about the tragedy. The approach often yields an outpouring of support and can actually help you cope with daily challenges. While every situation and circumstance may be different, there are others who have or are experiencing similar emotional pain and suffering. You are not alone. By speaking out about your experience and reaching out to others for support and guidance, small steps can be taken to survive each day of your life.

Saturday is National Survivors of Suicide Day. Visit www.afsp.org to find a local conference in your area to help you with your journey. The free local Buffalo conference will be held from noon to 3:30 p. m. in the Buffalo Psychiatric Center Butler Auditorium, 400 Forest Ave.

Phil Chearmonte
Amherst

Entertainment Calendar

- BEST BETS:**
- Thu 11/18: Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band
 - Thu 11/18: BB King Blues Festival
 - Fri 11/19: Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra: Gershwin Festival -- Part Two
 - Fri 11/19: Jimmy Wayne

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