



2

Contact: Julia Hampton, MS
Center for Health and Learning
Vermont Suicide Prevention Center
802-254-6590 Ext. 105
julia@healthandlearning.org
<https://healthandlearning.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Suicide Loss Survivor Resources

Resources across the state of Vermont for Suicide Loss Survivors

After the loss of a loved one by suicide, family and friends need support. This is what Joanna Cole found after her son died by suicide in 2003. “It was a tumultuous time within my family as everyone processed the loss differently,” Cole said. “It was a lifeline for me to have a support group of people with this shared experience. It was a place I felt comfortable sharing and it was helpful to see things differently based on other’s sharing.”

Recently she realized the Burlington area support groups were filled to capacity and not allowing new people to join. “Something’s got to be done about this,” she said and decided she was ready to lead a group. “I know how badly this resource is needed in Chittenden County,” Cole said. Whether it is someone who has lost someone recently to suicide or someone who is now ready to deal with a loss that occurred years ago, there are so many people touched by suicide.

With the support of NAMI-VT, she attended an American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) training in Cleveland, OH along with her co-leader Maria Grindle. Their support group begins September 19th at 6:30pm and will meet every 3rd Thursday of the month.

Grindle, who is finishing her Masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and has facilitated groups for NAMI-VT for the past 5 years, knows friends in the area who have lost someone to suicide. “People need a place to talk about it because there aren’t a lot of places to talk about suicide in our society,” Grindle said. The AFSP training she and Cole attended provided information about grief and elements of facilitation to build a safe space for people to share and learn from each other. “This is a support group, not a therapy group,” says Grindle, “where group members can express their painful experiences due to the loss of a loved one to suicide as well as how they are learning to cope and heal in a safe and respectful environment.”

Groups like this and other resources can be found around the state of Vermont. The Vermont Suicide Prevention Center (VTSPC) has a website highlighting suicide prevention efforts around Vermont and includes information on resources for survivors. VTSPC is a public private partnership with the Vermont Department



of Mental Health with a mission to create health-promoting communities that have the knowledge, attitudes, skills and resources to reduce the risk of suicide. “Understanding and accepting the loss of a loved one by suicide is a journey,” says JoEllen Tarallo, Director of the VTSPC. “As part of our mission we want to ensure survivors have the support they need.”

A packet of resources that can be found at <http://www.vtspc.org> and includes a list of online and print resources, as well as a listing of Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Groups across the state. “After the loss of my son,” says Cole, “I read anything I could get my hands on to try and understand suicide better and why my son had died this way.” For others, the information is overwhelming and focusing on self-care is the most important thing to do. Self-care tips are also included in the VTSPC Suicide Loss Survivor Packet. “The most important thing to know is that you are not alone and you can get through this,” says Tarallo.

###

<https://healthandlearning.org>