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**Someone I Love Died By Suicide**

**By Joan Bramsch**

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Someone I Love Died By Suicide  
by Doreen Cammarata

This month marks the "National Suicide Survivor Day". November 17, 2001 is set aside to recognize all those who have endured the grief surrounding the suicide of a loved one. I would like to dedicate my first column to my mom. November 14th was her birthday and she died by suicide 15 years ago.

As a survivor myself, I reflect upon how much my life has changed and developed since my mom's death. An adolescent when her death occurred, my life was ultimately shaped into becoming a resource and support for individuals challenged by depression, suicide, grief and various types of loss.

In my training as a counselor I focused on my own personal and professional growth in the field of grief counseling. I learned that education is a reciprocal process. My greatest teachers have been the numerous students that I worked with in an alternative high school dropout retrieval program as well as the many young children I worked with at a local hospice program. While teaching at a university I am fortunate to have been touched by so many caring professional counselors, nurses and social workers who have attended my classes as well as by the resourceful professors who gave me my foundation of training.

During this specific time of recognition for suicide survivors, conferences will meet throughout the country to educate and bring survivors together. You can access a "Live Webcast" on Saturday, November 17th from noon to 1:30p.m. by visiting the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention website: [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org). This organization provides research, bibliographies, updated articles and much more. For more information you can contact them directly at (212) 363-3500.

In my work facilitating suicide support groups I encourage survivors to share what they find as the key differences in grieving a suicide. Most survivors express intensified shock, anger and guilt in coping with the death of their special person.

## Someone I Love Died By Suicide

I could identify with these feelings. Although I was only 17 when my mom died by suicide, I experienced extreme guilt in my grief. I believed that "if only" I had done something different, I could have saved her. I eventually came to terms with the fact that there was nothing I could have done to stop what had occurred. Like many survivors I too beat myself up with the "what if's" for quite some time.

Not all survivors experience guilt and anger but that tends to be a prominent theme for most. Anger can be felt in various ways. It is commonly directed at the individual who died. When in touch with this type of anger, many survivors tend to reflect on the struggles their loved one endured and then ultimately feel guilt ridden once again. For some, anger is directed at surviving loved ones in a blaming fashion. Encouraging survivors to express their anger as well as their other feelings in a therapeutic environment will have positive long-term effects.

It is crucial to be aware of the accentuated duration and intensity of grief following a suicide. Most individuals take years to recover from the devastation of this event. It is estimated that someone grieving a sudden loss will take three times the average amount of time to heal from the death. Being sensitive to the amount of time and the extreme emotions that a survivor will feel during his grief is one way that you can assist in the healing process. Another way to help a survivor is by allowing him to tell and retell the specifics surrounding the death.

Depending on the relationship between the survivor and deceased, the death may alter the existing person's life in numerous ways. If the survivor is a child, there most likely will be vast differences in the way he experiences life following the death. For an adult, specifically a spouse, adapting to an entirely new role is only one of the many challenges that widowhood will bring. No matter what the age of the survivor there is a forced new way of life. The grieving individual will now adapt a whole new perception of what his world will be as well as his trust in the natural progression of life.

When informing loved one's about the death, honesty is best. Small lies only become larger lies. A survivor spared the truth to be protected will end up re-grieving the death of their loved one when the truth is unfolded. This can occur even many years after the actual date of the death. Remember to always disclose age appropriate details after carefully determining the maturation of the survivor. However, know the consequences of dishonesty and consult with trained professional in communicating the truth.

Validating and commemorating the life of a loved one is extremely beneficial in the healing process. Apparent simplistic gestures like planting a tree or creating a memory box can be quite empowering. As a personal way of validating my mother's life as well as her death, I created "Someone I Love Died By Suicide: A story for child survivors and those who care for them." I designed this book after years of research and working in the field. It is appropriate for all ages and is the only book available to read directly with children survivors. More information is available about my book on my website: <http://www.griefguidance.com>.

In closing, I share my knowledge and my book with you as a way of trying to reach all those who have been devastated by the suicide of a loved one. Please join me and take this opportunity to recognize the numerous suicide survivors in our communities.

## Someone I Love Died By Suicide

Read The Book Review Here ..

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"Someone I Love Died by Suicide: A story for child survivors and those who care for them". This book is one of only a few books available today that is specifically designed to be read to children survivors.

About The Author...

Doreen T. Cammarata, MS, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, is currently an adjunct instructor at Florida Atlantic University educating graduate students and professionals on grief counseling issues. She has had eight years of university experience as an assistant instructor in addition to her full time work experiences as a school counselor for at-risk youth and as a grief and bereavement specialist working with adults and children at a local hospice program. She is also on the board and serves as the Program Chairperson for the Palm Beach County, Florida ADEC Chapter.

An equally important credential is that Doreen Cammarata is a suicide survivor. Doreen's mother

suffered from depression. During Doreen's adolescence, her mother died by suicide. Consequently, Doreen understands personally as well as professionally the need to address this issue. Visit her site.  
<http://www.griefguidance.com>

READ MORE HERE:

<http://joanbramsch.com/counseling/suicide.shtml>

JOAN BRAMSCH is a family person, educator, writer and E-publisher. Her articles appear internationally in print and online. Six of her best-selling adult novels – near one million copies – have worldwide distribution. Her Empowered Parenting Ezine serves 1000 parents around the globe.

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**"Someone I Love Died By Suicide" –review**

**By Joan Bramsch**

**"Someone I Love Died By Suicide" –review by Joan Bramsch**

Book Review: "Someone I Love Died By Suicide"  
written by Doreen T. Cammarata, MS

"Someone I Love Died by Suicide: A story for child survivors and those who care for them".

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Book Review By Joan Bramsch

## Someone I Love Died By Suicide

My dear Doreen,

I've completed your book. Outstanding! You're fulfilling such a need among children who lose someone they love by suicide. You provide so much help for youngsters and teens. Actually, you have also helped me.

When I read your suggestion about making a memory box I knew exactly what I would do: I happen to collect handmade wooden boxes that once held stationery, candy, cigars, or was simply a treasure box. Now I am going to choose among my favorites and make one a Memory Box for my beloved Bill. I thank you for this healing suggestion.

Your book gives mourners permission to grieve. You help them to find their way through the difficult work of grieving, after loving deeply. And you are careful to point out that there is no "one right way." Bravo! But you do show the reader what s/he can expect, that it's okay to cry and feel sad, that it's okay to be angry and punch a pillow or throw stones where they won't do any harm.

Last, you help your reader to understand there is no time limit on grieving, but that it is also okay and, actually, wonder-filled to celebrate the memories about her/his loved one by being happy and having fun.

I am so glad you've written this important story. Surely, you are doing Angel Work! Thank you, in the name of children everywhere, who need your help.

Sincerely,

Joan Bramsch

JOAN BRAMSCH is a family person, educator, writer and E-publisher. Her articles appear internationally in print and online. Six of her best-selling adult novels – near one million copies – have worldwide distribution. Her Empowered Parenting Ezine serves 1000 parents around the globe.

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