



Hinds Hospice

Honoring the Journey

FALL NEWS UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2019

Hinds Hospice Adds a Much Needed Service

LOSS Teams: A Light in the Dark



Brandy Lidbeck, Program Coordinator for the LOSS Program

guilt, shame and isolation to those left behind. Brandy Lidbeck is a licensed therapist and grief counselor with Hinds Hospice. She is the Program Coordinator for the Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) program. She also knows more about suicide loss than anyone should.

"I am a two-time survivor of suicide loss," Brandy says. "I was 10 years old when I walked in and found my mom, after she had taken her own life. When I was 27, my cousin came home from Iraq and also took his own life." Brandy withdrew from offers of support, and didn't talk about her experience. "As a kid, you lose all sense of security and safety. For a while, every time I walked back into the house I was thinking, 'Am I going to find someone else?' You feel anxiety and hopelessness, so you keep it inside, I never said anything to anybody." Added to the loss of her mother, Brandy also felt agonizing shame. "I just wanted people to believe my parents

Life and loss are intertwined. Eventually, most of us experience the death of a loved one. The anticipation of grief after a loss is part of the human condition. We know we will hurt, we hope to heal.

Loss by suicide is unique. It is a loss that frequently does not heal, or at least not quickly, and it can bring unexpected

were divorced and I lived with my dad. If people knew my mom had killed herself, I wondered what they would think about me, 'Like you must not have been worthy enough.' It messes with you. So I told no one. I kept it a secret."

For Brandy, that dark isolation went on for over a decade. "It took me 13 years to find another suicide loss survivor. I'd never seen or spoken with another survivor in all those years," she says. "But when I met the first one, a friend of mine who'd lost her dad to suicide, she said things to me that I'd been thinking for so long. I thought I was the only one feeling these things, and when I found out I wasn't the only one, that's when the light came on."

Studies show that survivors of suicide loss are four times as likely to die by suicide themselves. That's why Hinds Hospice, in cooperation with the Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health, is establishing the new LOSS program. This critical support to suffering families, offered without cost, disrupts that destructive cycle.

A two-person LOSS team, comprised of a clinician and a volunteer suicide-

loss survivor, comes to the scene of a death by suicide within an hour of a call from first responders. Their goal is to share resources and local support that are available. They also do the hard work in the immediate aftermath, letting survivors know they are not alone. Their mission is to restore a sense of safety, and a path to healing.

Brandy knows the value of that support. "It typically takes about four-and-a-half years after a suicide loss for a survivor to access any sort of support or resources," she says. "But with the LOSS Program in place, that drops to about 39 days. Having a team there soon after a suicide removes some of the barriers for survivors, so they have immediate access to the support they need. The service will be expanding early next year, when LOSS teams will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It shines a light, and instills hope right away, especially during those darkest moments."

The LOSS program provides support and resources to all survivors, extending beyond immediate family members. Through funding from Fresno County and financial support from the community, no-cost therapy sessions are offered to each survivor. This funding ensures that affordability is never a barrier to receiving help.

The LOSS Team is just one component of the bereavement care provided at little or no cost by Hinds Hospice's Center for Grief and Healing. "Families often find comfort in the Hinds Hospice Survivors of Suicide Loss (SOSL) Program, a peer-led support group which meets twice each month at the Hinds Hospice Patient and Family Service Center," says Brandy. The SOSL program also provides community outreach to local schools, businesses and organizations to help educate about suicide prevention. "We lose an average of two people a week to suicide in Fresno County. The community training equips participants with the tools they need to recognize the signs of suicide and hopefully act to prevent it. The suicide loss groups help people heal."

In addition to suicide loss, the Hinds Hospice Center for Grief and Healing provides individual counseling and peer-led support groups specific to many other types of loss. Special programs support those experiencing the loss of a spouse, the loss of a child or infant, childhood grief, infertility, and caregiver support. All of these services are available to anyone in the community who is grieving, and most of the programs are made possible through community support.

Brandy sees the LOSS Program as a light in the dark. "It took me 13 years to even talk about looking for help. It's an opportunity for those who've lost loved ones to suicide to help breathe life into those who are just entering the experience. It's a way to heal our own losses, as well."

For more information about Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors Program (LOSS), or Fresno Survivors of Suicide Loss (SOSL), contact Brandy Lidbeck at Hinds Hospice at (559) 322-5877 or blidbeck@hindshospice.org.

If you would like to support Hinds Hospice in our mission to ease suffering for families touched by suicide and other difficult losses, please call (559) 360-0308, or log on to www.lovehinds.org.

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13th Annual

Hinds Hospice

Lights OF Love

Please be our guest at the

Lights of Love Tree Lighting Ceremony

Thursday, December 5, 2019

at The Shops at River Park
[Between Teazer's and Yoshino's]

Gathering begins at 6:00 p.m.
Ceremony begins at 6:30 p.m.

This event is made possible thanks to the generosity of our presenting sponsor.


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Thank you to everyone who made the Hinds Hospice 2019 Gala possible.



A Night Among Stars Gala 2019



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