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# B.C. SAFE

Broome County Suicide Awareness For Everyone



*The mission of B.C. SAFE is to reduce the number of suicides and suicide attempts by increasing public awareness and providing educational and training resources in Broome County.*

## 6th Annual World Suicide Prevention Day Breakfast



On September 10, in recognition of World Suicide Prevention Day, the BC SAFE Coalition and the Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier co-hosted the sixth annual WSPD breakfast event at the Binghamton Club. Close to 100 people from the community, and local organizations and businesses attended this free event and were treated to a powerful message of survival from this year's keynote speaker, Brittany Cooley. Ms. Cooley has authored an autobiography entitled "Strength Personified: A Personal Story of Tragedy to Triumph" and shared her story with a captivated audience. Attendees were then given the option to attend one of three break-out sessions: Talk Saves Lives – an evidence-based introduction to suicide prevention from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; a seminar focusing on secondary trauma and burnout for professionals in the mental health field; and an expressive arts workshop for loss survivors.

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day, also known as Survivor Day, is a day designated on which those affected by suicide can join together for healing and support. It was determined that Survivor Day would always fall on the Saturday before American Thanksgiving, as the holidays are often a difficult time for suicide loss survivors.

Each year, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention supports hundreds of large and small Survivor Day events around the world, in which suicide loss survivors come together to find connection, understanding and

### International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

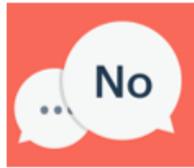
hope through their shared experience. In 2018, 370 total events took place, including 32 international sites in 19 countries. Here in Broome County, On Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11am to 2 pm, United Health Services will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Survivors of Suicide Loss Day at the Russell Room at Binghamton



General Hospital, 33 Mitchell Ave, Binghamton NY 13903. For more information or to register, please go to: [https://afsp.org/survivor\\_day/binghamton-new-york-2/](https://afsp.org/survivor_day/binghamton-new-york-2/).



## SELF-CARE DURING THE *holidays*



**Set Boundaries**  
It's OK to say No



**Carve Out Me Time**  
20 minutes just for YOU



**Take a Social Media Break**  
No comparing to others

Follow-up. Leave a message, send a text, or call. Contact increases connectedness, potentially reducing the risk of suicide.

## Dealing with Grief During the Holiday Season

Seasonal family gatherings can be painful reminders of the absence of a loved one. Although, they can also be comforting rituals where you can focus on good memories in an attempt to recapture your sense of joy. Here are some important things to keep in mind if you are mourning the loss of a loved one this year:

### 1. Only do what feels right.

Don't feel obligated to participate in anything that doesn't feel doable. Grieving takes time.

### 2. Accept your feelings — whatever they might be.

Everyone takes his or her own path in grief and mourning. Be accepting of the inevitable ups and downs you may be feeling.

### 3. Call on your family and friends.

Talk with loved ones about your emotions and be honest about how you'd like to do things this year.

### 4. Focus on the kids.

Many holidays place special attention on children, and it often helps to focus on their needs. Participate in the family rituals or gatherings that are most important to the kids and excuse yourself when you reach your limit.

### 5. Plan ahead.

Sometimes the anticipation is worse than the actual holiday. Create comforting activities in the weeks approaching a holiday so that you have something to look forward to. New activities might be easier, but familiar traditions might be comforting as well.

### 6. Scale back.

If the thought of many holiday activities feels painful, overwhelming or inappropriate, cutting back may help. Maybe opt for minimal decorations at home, take a break from sending holiday greetings, or limit holiday parties to small gatherings with your closest friends and family.

### 7. Give.

In times of grief, sometimes the biggest comfort is to give to others. Consider making a donation in a loved one's name to a charity or cause he or she cherished or volunteer to help people in some way that is relevant to your loved one.

### 8. Acknowledge those who have passed on.

When we are grieving a loss, it can be helpful to participate in a holiday ritual in his or her memory. Some ideas: lighting candles for them, talking about them, buying children's toys or books to donate in their name, dedicating a service to them, planting a tree, displaying their picture or placing an item of theirs among holiday decorations.

### 9. Do something different.

Acknowledge that things have changed; indeed, the holiday will not be the same as it ever was. Accepting this will help manage expectations. Plan new activities and create new memories. This could mean a new location for family celebrations, going out to eat, or volunteering. Many families return to their usual routines and rituals after the first year, but some enjoy incorporating new experiences permanently in honor of their loved one.

### 10. Skip it.

If you feel that it will be too much for you and you'd like to simply opt out of participation in a holiday, let family and friends know. But plan alternative comforting activities for yourself and let someone know what you will be doing. It's a good idea to make sure someone checks in with you on that day.

Adapted from AARP.org <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/friends-family/info-12-2012/death-loss-christmas-holidays-gover.html>

