

Postvention Bereavement in the Face of COVID

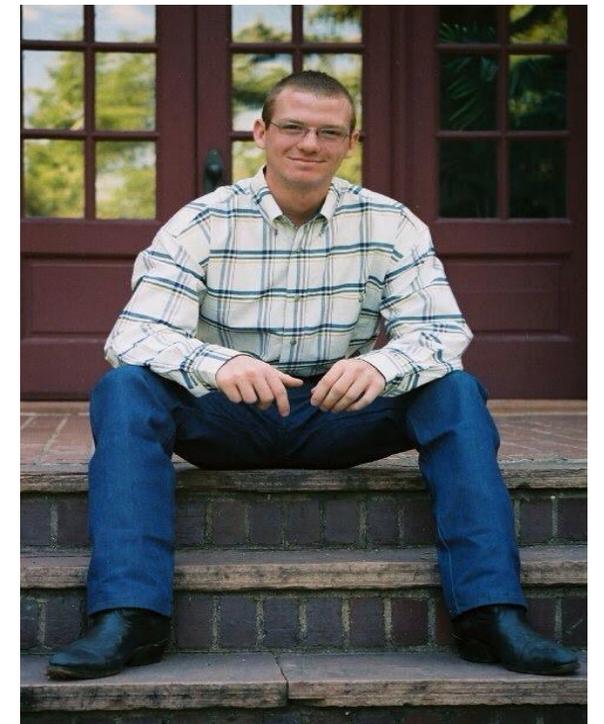
Kevin and Betty Van Thournout

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Facilitators of Heartbeat Survivors After Suicide

- Ryan was born on June 6, 1988.
- Ryan Suicided on July 10, 2014

- We assumed Facilitator role August 2016



Heartbeat Survivors After Suicide

- Heartbeat is a group for mutual support of those who have lost a loved one through suicide.
- We understand the conflict created for you by the cause of this death.
- We acknowledge that normal grief reactions are intensified and complicated following suicide.
- We relieve isolation by offering the empathy of other “nice people from good families” who have experienced the magnitude of this kind of loss.
- We extend support toward resolving your feelings of... responsibility, guilt, self-doubt, failure, rejection, stigma, shame, anger, hostility, religious fears and your search for answers.
- We recognize that great strength and healing are gained by using one’s own painful growth in support of others.

Bereaved Support During COVID

- Genuine empathy
 - Comforts by a loving, non-judgmental presence

Via Zoom meetings we continue meeting opening and introductions.

Empathy over a virtual platform isn't like being there.

Support System's Role

- Validation of loss and grief
 - Acknowledges the loss as if the death had been by any other cause – gives permission to grieve
- Normalize grief response to death by suicide
 - Provide guidance toward resolution of grief

Attendance by many help with validation of grief

Through Zoom we can discuss feelings and emotions and hear others share their healing progresses

Support System's Role

- Provides relationship loss identity
 - Lends acceptance to the worth of the one who died and to the value of the relationship lost

In person groups were able to split up into relationship groups; Not able with virtual meetings.

The large group shows much compassion and empathy for new loss.

Support System's Role

- Encouragement to speak openly of the death
 - Allows survivors to tell the story – Discourages efforts of secrecy
- Role modeling – a loved one's suicide is survivable

People who are many years out since their loss.

Survivors from other cities and states are starting to find our Zoom support. We will continue to use Zoom to support those who can't attend even after we are able to get back to our regular meets.

Contact

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[Web: www.heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.org](http://www.heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.org)

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