

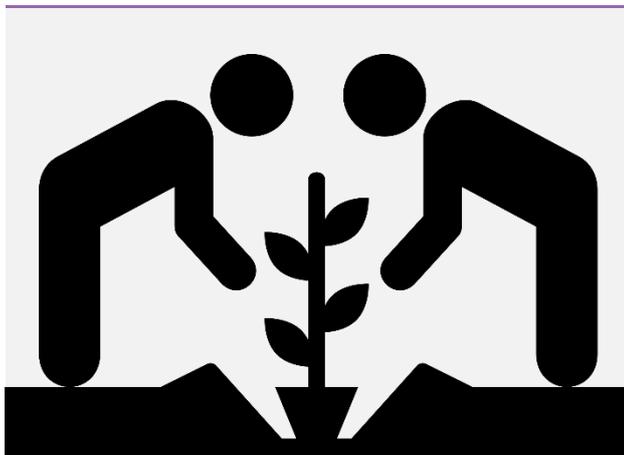


# BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

MAY 2018

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**Spring has been very much a late and short lived season this year, still lower than average temperatures and sunshine.... But signs that summer is on the way are here at last. After the long, cold, despair of winter, life that has laid dormant over the past months is springing forth and bringing with it hope and promise.**

Each morning I walk down the garden path looking for signs of new life, (and then try and remember what the new shoots pushing through the ground might be!) Last year I took part in DAST's sunflower competition and

loved watching the tiny shoots grow and spread their leaves and blooms. There are many analogies of life in nature and the garden and my morning cuppa in the garden always inspires me. After a busy and emotional day the garden soothes and heals me. And when I am troubled or stressed a good spot of digging, rigorous pruning or lawn mowing is very cathartic!

Many people after a close bereavement feel the desire to hibernate, bury themselves away, unsure of who they are anymore, what their place in society is, how to be. They may find themselves going through the motions, smiling in company and trying to live up to what they believe others people's expectations of them are. And all too often they are quietly screaming inside.

Much of who we are is very much tied up with who we live and love with, by our relationships. So when we lose a close loved one our sense of identity struggles to redefine who we now are. We each have to learn a new way of living, of being, of loving; ourselves and the world around us. This struggle also includes us finding our own voice, being brave and strong enough to speak out, to be authentic and not be the person people expect us to be.

On my daily walks around the garden I watch brown lifeless twigs slowly come to life, fuller and richer with vibrancy and life than the year before. I watch the tiny shoots struggling to push themselves through the still cold earth, weedy and tentative at first, then quickly growing to reveal what they are in all their glory. I know that in just a few short weeks the plants and shrubs will be sharing the fullness of

who they are with the bees and butterflies. I know that my garden this summer will be richer and fuller than it was last year.

This is what is possible for all who seek to rediscover their voice, their identity, their place in life, following a bereavement. Just as my garden has a little help from me, a little weeding to help the new growth, a little pruning when something is looking a little out of control, a stake here and there to support new growth; so we all need a little help in our own way. May we all, when we need it, find our voice enough to ask for help. Seek the help and support we need from friends and like-minded people, and be that help to others we come across needing it.



## **DAST BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT**

Coping with the pain and heartache of a close bereavement is always difficult - not least when it's accompanied by a sense of loneliness and a feeling that no one understands. We want to help those who are living with loss to discover hope for the future, and the strength to rebuild their lives and the lives of their families.

If you would be interested in being part of a support group with others who have undergone a similar asbestos related bereavement please do get in touch with us. Pop along to one of our events, you will receive a warm welcome. Or if you would prefer someone to talk to on the phone, call us to find out more about our Telephone Befriending Service or PostChat penpals. You can also join our dedicated FB page - DAST Bereavement Support

**Bereavement Forum & Launch of our DVD - Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 10:00 - 15:00 (lunch included); Shape's Pottery Museum, Swadlincote, Derbys.** Please see enclosed flyer for more details and booking form

## **BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Grief Survival Guide: How to Navigate Loss and all that Comes With It, by Jeff Brazier** with many thanks to Kim for reviewing this book for us: "Initially I thought it was too general for me as it is about loss of parents, children, as well as partners. It also covers lost relationships, such as children who've never known a parent etc. Having got further into it I have found it really useful. I've even started to make notes!

Really interesting ideas about inviting grief in and living with it rather than avoiding it. The author believing that if you learn to manage the grief it doesn't eventually catch up with you & take over.

**Saying Goodbye to Ian and Travelling Solo, both by Jo Cundy.** Recommended by Marilyn and Yvonne. These are written by someone with a strong Christian Faith but does not presume all the readers have that faith. Jo shares her experiences of grief by mesothelioma. Very empathic writer.

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## **LIGHTHOUSE GROUPS**

Here at DAST we are keen to encourage friendship and mutual support from others who have experienced the loss of a loved one, no matter how long ago.

We have several open groups meeting on a regular monthly basis and have frequent Coffee & Chat Events. Sadly we have been unable to continue the Scunthorpe Group although we do have another group that meets in Lincolnshire. If you have an idea of a venue and would like to see a group in your locality, please do get in touch.

### **1st Saturday of each month**

#### **Sleaford Lighthouse Group**

10am – 12noon, The Source Centre, Southgate, Sleaford

### **Wednesday 9th May**

#### **Leicester Lighthouse Group**

1.00pm – 3.00pm, Druckers, Fosse Park

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month**

#### **Derby Lighthouse Group**

1.00pm – 3.00pm, The Book Café, 21 Cornmarket, Derby DE1 1QH

### **Last Wednesday of each month**

#### **Nottingham Lighthouse Group**

10am – 12noon. The Bell Inn, Angel Row, Nottingham



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## **COFFEE & CHAT**

**1.00pm – 3.00pm, Fri 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

**The Assembly Rooms, Hill Top, Bolsover S44 6NG** - Our first Coffee & Chat in Bolsover to see if there is enough interest for a Bolsover Lighthouse Group.

**1.00pm – 3.00pm, Wed 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018, The Cornmarket, Kettering NN15 7QA**

Our first Coffee & Chat in Kettering to see if there is enough interest for a Northamptonshire Lighthouse Group.

**To find out more about any of these events please contact Jo Reeve on 01246 380415**

**Email: [Joanna.reeve@asbestossupport.co.uk](mailto:Joanna.reeve@asbestossupport.co.uk)**

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## **Action Mesothelioma Day**

Action Mesothelioma Day takes place on the first Friday in July. This year we will mark the day by planting a tree at Grassmoor Country Park – once the site of Grassmoor Colliery where many people would have been exposed to asbestos. We will then move on to North Wingfield Community Centre for a buffet lunch and an opportunity to chat. Save the date of Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July and we will send out more detailed information nearer the time.



## Unsent Letters

If you have repressed thoughts and feelings about another person – especially one that you can't speak to because they are no longer with you – then this can cause stress and low moods. But there is a way around this. Writing "Unsent letters" is a good way of expressing those things that you would like to say, but are unable to. Even though the subject of your letter will never read it, the act of writing the negative thoughts out of your system is beneficial for many people. Perhaps you don't even know what those feelings are – you might only be conscious of something on your mind that should not be there. Sitting down to compose a letter is a good way of finding out what is troubling you – and when you know what that is, you have a better chance of being able to put it to rest.

The asbestos bereavement project has had reports from two people who both found this idea helpful to them. They both used different methods – here are some ideas on how to go about it:

- A hand-written letter. Use a scrap of paper or a whole notebook, specially bought for the purpose. It doesn't matter what you use, and there's no need to worry about spelling or grammar as no-one is going to read it. Just scribble down all of your thoughts as if it were a one-way conversation with the person you have in mind. When you have finished, you can tear it up and dispose of it. It is the act of writing, not the final product that is important.
- Those who would prefer to bash their letter out on a keyboard have a number of options. The first of these is to type your letter and then simply delete it. Or, you can set up an email account especially to receive your rants. If only you have the log in details to this account, they will only come to light again if you choose to sign in and read them. This might be better than deleting your letter, as apparently the act of pressing the send button is cathartic!
- There are more public ways of expressing pent-up feelings - which can be kept anonymous if you choose. A Twitter account can enable you to send out short, pithy comments in occasional bursts if this is what you need to do. Some people choose to publish their letters as a blog, where other people can comment and share their experiences, but this does take a fair bit of social media know-how.

If you decide to have a go at writing an unsent letter and you find it helpful, we would love to hear from you. How did you go about it? How did it make you feel?



**If anyone would like to be more involved in DAST please do get in touch for a chat, we have various opportunities from helping out in the office to becoming a Community Champion or getting involved with Befriending by post or telephone or fundraising.**