

Triggers

February 2019, Volume 25, Issue 2

Moving On To Never Moving On

By Elizabeth Lamie

I have been there, and if you are reading this, maybe you have been, too. Or maybe you know someone who has but you don't even realize it.

It goes something like this... You get the courage to venture out to the store after a morning of crying and facing another wave of grief. You finally get to the store, optimistic with your list, hoping to check a few things off that to-do list. Maybe crossing items off your to-do list will make you feel better. You step through the doors and grab a cart. A Goldfish cracker sign smacks you in the face. You loved Goldfish crackers while you were pregnant. In fact, you jokingly called the babies your little goldfish.

"Ok, FOCUS," you think. You grab your cart and try to push through.

Moving on...

You try to focus on finding a new bathing suit for the trip you are really excited about. You search through the racks thinking, "Ok, what would look good on a Mom?" Except you realize that to everyone else, you aren't really a Mom. You gave birth and held your children. You went to the funeral home on the worst day of your life and planned their cremation. You have a Mom-heart and a Mom-body but no children.

Ok, no bathing suit.

Moving on...

You decide to go look in the men's section for something for your husband—buying others gifts always cheer you up. On the way to the men's section, an adorable outfit catches your eye. Then you realize the mannequin is also adorable—adorably pregnant. You push the cart hard and force yourself to move on. You get to the men's section and try to look at t-shirts. Then you realize Father's Day is coming up, and the rack you happened to choose is full of t-shirts that say "World's Greatest Dad" or "Dad of the Year."

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BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Support for bereaved parents of pregnancy and infant loss

Upcoming Events

Celebrate Silas 2019 Memorial

5k run/walk

Sunday, March 3rd

Help raise \$10,000 for The Dougy Center! Your donation includes participation in the event, a commemorative t-shirt and free admission to the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden, for day of event. 100% of all registration donations will go directly to The Dougy Center, The National Center for Grieving Children & Families, and are fully tax-deductible.

Registration and further information at CelebrateSilas.com

9:30am - Sign In

10:00am - 5k Run / Walk

Duniway Elementary School

7700 SE Reed College Place, Portland, OR

Celebrate Silas Mural Project

Celebrate Silas 2019, in collaboration with local artist, Max Collins, brings you a Mural Project to help honor and share the memory of your loved one. Multiple locations and times available to make a 16 x 24-inch mural based on a photograph. Preregistration required at CelebrateSilas.com

Brief Encounters Board Meeting

The Brief Encounters Board would like to welcome you to our upcoming meeting on Monday, February 18th at 6 pm. There are many opportunities to get involved in our work and we would love for you to join us as we move forward. Additionally, there are several board positions currently available. Even if you simply want to come and listen, we hope you will attend. We ask that volunteers be one year out or more from your loss. Board meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at Sunnyside Community House, 3520 SE Yamhill, Portland. Contact Board Chair Rachel with questions at RachelM@briefencounters.org

Telephone & Group Facilitator Training

Sunday, February 10th, 2019 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Avenue, Portland

If you are interested in volunteering to give phone line support or facilitate meetings with Brief Encounters, please join us for a session on supporting the bereaved with compassion and understanding. Training provided by Pat Schwiebert, RN. We ask that our volunteers be one year out from the anniversary of their loss, but if facilitation is something you envision for yourself in the future, please attend. Please bring a lunch item to share potluck style.

Contact Rachel at RachelM@briefencounters.org with questions and to RSVP.

From your editors...

When loss is new, triggers seem to be around every corner- walking through Target and finding yourself too near the baby aisle, opening your mailbox to find another formula sample, checking your e-mail and seeing an update on how big your baby should be this week... the list could go on and on. Even now, almost seven years later, triggers can blindsides us, despite our best efforts to avoid them. Sometimes a song, a movie, a comment, a smell... and we are wiping away tears once again. We hope you find some comfort in knowing that while our triggers might not all be the same, we all have them. We hope you will be gentle with yourself this month and wish you peace as we miss our tiniest Valentines.

Nicole Keeler and Laura Klyzek
Mothers of Braxton, Claire, and their siblings

Upcoming newsletter topic...

March: GRIEF OVER TIME

How does grief change as you get further out from your loss? It is our hope to include stories from parents at different points such as one year, five years, or even ten years later. As time goes on, grief changes but is still there. What is grief like for you now? See page 6 for writing prompts for this topic. (Credit to Sarah for her topic submission via Facebook)

Newsletter Submissions

We welcome and encourage submissions to the newsletter. Submissions may be published anonymously if requested. Sharing your story can provide healing and comfort for you – and other parents. The editor reserves the right to edit and select from the materials submitted. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Brief Encounters, but those of the individual authors. Please send titled articles and submissions to:
newsletter@briefencounters.org

Newsletter printing provided by AnchorPointe

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

2116 NE 18th Ave., Portland, OR 97212

Message Phone: 503-699-8006

Web: www.briefencounters.org

Twitter: twitter.com/briefencount

Facebook: [private/closed groups Brief Encounters Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support and Brief Encounters Parenting After Loss](#)

Established in 1992 by a group of parents, Brief Encounters is a non-profit, non-sectarian support group for parents whose babies have died before, during, or after birth. At informal, mutually supportive meetings, bereaved parents and their families share their stories, discuss issues that arise from pregnancy and infant loss, and remember their children. Through talking or just listening, we learn what grief is --- and how, through understanding and caring, we heal.

EXECUTIVE BOARD AND STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair: Rachel Murfitt

Co-Chair: OPEN

Advisor: Pat Schwiebert, RN

Treasurer: Sandy Faber

Secretary: Laura Klyzek

Database Manager: Megan Wright

Newsletter Editors: Nicole Keeler and Laura Klyzek

Web Site Manager: Lucas Klyzek

Members at Large: OPEN

MEETING AND PHONE FACILITATORS

Daniele Riehl, Pat Schwiebert, Heather Smith, Megan Wright, Shannon Stemm Patel, Laura Klyzek

HOSPITAL LIAISONS

Raina Dey, Fawn Harris, Cheryl Miller, Rachel Murfitt, Shannon Stemm Patel

BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are conducted monthly each third Monday at Sunnyside Community House, 3520 SE Yamhill, Portland. Those interested in volunteering are welcome to attend. Please email inquiries to RachelM@briefencounters.org.

LOVE GIFTS

Love Gift submission form available on page 6. For Love Gifts to be acknowledged in a specific newsletter issue, we must receive it by the 10th of the prior month.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR REMOVAL FROM MAILING LIST
Please contact our database manager Megan Wright at 503-646-1335 or by email at database@briefencounters.org.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED: INCLUSIONS OR CHANGES

Please contact our database manager Megan Wright at 503-646-1335 or by email at megan.k.wright@comcast.net. For children to be remembered in a specific newsletter issue, we must receive your request by the 10th of the prior month.

SAFE ARRIVALS

Please send Safe Arrivals to newsletter@briefencounters.org.

Moving On To Never Moving On

Continued from page 1

Ok...No men's section.

Moving on...

You scoot around to the electronic section and realize that it is directly across from the baby section. Again, it's almost Father's Day and the end cap is full of onesies that say "I love my Dad," "I Keep my Dad up at Night," and "Dad's Greatest Gift."

"Oh yes," you think, "greatest gift."

You hope the dad that holds a child wearing that onesie realizes how true it is.

Moving on...

At this point, you are exhausted with grief, more so than you were than when you got to the store in the first place. You love to read so you go check out the newest releases. On the way, you see the full season of "Parenthood" for sale and cute little Harry Potter t-shirts for the twin boys you never got to bring home.

Moving on...

Finally, books—some relief. The place where you can dive into a world that doesn't really exist. A reality that is unlike the one you are living in—the one that you don't want to think about. There, you come across the newest cookbook release: *Cooking For Your Picky Child*.

Moving on...

The toy section screams to your left and the summer fun section is on your right. You steer towards summer fun. What could go wrong, right? Summer is great and makes everyone happy. You see matching swimmyies that your 3-year-old boys should be wearing and a dinosaur float that would have been perfect.

If only they were here.

Moving on...

The food section appears. You grab your favorite wine, which you know you will need later. You see gummy bears, Cookie Crisp, and every other food marketable to children.

Moving on...

House section. You find a new candle and go look at bedding. You happen to turn down the wrong aisle and are faced with Star Wars sheets and Spaceship alarm clocks.

Moving on...

You are almost through the torture.

You grab your prenatal vitamins in the toiletry section and look for any new gadget, vitamin, or potion that may help pre-pregnancy and may help you get pregnant. You will do anything to be there again.

The makeup section reminds you that no matter how much makeup you wear, you can't cover up the look of pain on your face that you are sure shows through

no matter what mask you paint on.

You checkout behind a mother that looks stressed with two young children in her cart. What you wouldn't give to have your two children in the cart. Your stress is a different kind, it can be a dull ache or a debilitating cloud. Her stress is obvious and clear to everyone around her. Yours is invisible. You force yourself to look at a magazine and see the celebrity news—fighting over custody, this celebrity is pregnant. You check out and return your cart. You walk slowly back to the car, and although you only got two items, you realize that you are leaving with a lot more than you bargained for.

A single tear runs down your face as you rush to your car and slam the door before the waterfall breaks again.

Moving on...

You head home.

Tomorrow is another day.

Tomorrow will be better.

Tomorrow, you won't go to the store.

Tomorrow you may not get out of bed.

But for today, at least you tried to move on.

But you know that really, there is no moving on.

Originally posted on StillStandingMag.com

Ocean

I am in love with Ocean
lifting her thousands of white hats
in the chop of the storm,
or lying smooth and blue, the
loveliest bed in the world.
In the personal life, there is

always grief more than enough,
a heart-load for each of us
on the dusty road. I suppose
there is a reason for this, so I will be
patient, acquiescent. But I will live
nowhere except here, by Ocean, trusting
equally in all the blast and welcome
of her sorrowless, salt self.

– Mary Oliver, from *Red Bird*



Love Gifts

Donations to Brief Encounters help us to maintain our outreach to bereaved families through this newsletter, support groups, and other resources. Often Love Gifts are given by a family in memory of a child who has died. Others may wish to give a general donation or give thanks for their own living children. We acknowledge gifts here without reference to amount given.

Brief Encounters is a non-profit 501©3 organization; therefore, no gift is too small. Each donation goes a long way toward printing brochures, maintaining the Brief Encounters website, providing monthly meetings, performing outreach to healthcare providers, mailing this newsletter, and many other ways we seek to care for bereaved parents.

This month, we thank the following donors for their generosity and love:

*"It is impossible for you to go on as you were before,
so you must go on as you never have."*

~ Cheryl Strayed

Love Gift Donation Form

*** To donate via PayPal, go to briefencounters.org and click on the PayPal link.**

Enclosed is a donation of: \$
In memory of:

Message to be included in the newsletter with your donation acknowledgement:

Birth date:

Death date:

Donated by:

Please consider your employer's matching gift program when submitting a donation. To receive a receipt, please provide your return address:

I wish for my gift to remain anonymous.

Please assist us in reducing the chance of errors or omissions by sending your Love Gift message with this form. Please **do not** send your message separately to the editor or database manager.

Name(s) of Parents:

Thank you!

Send form and payment to: 2116 NE 18th Avenue, Portland, OR 97212

Checks can be made payable to Brief Encounters. For credit card payments, please provide the following:

Name as it appears on card:

Credit/Debit # _____ Exp date ___-___ CVC# _____

Please note: For Love Gifts to be acknowledged in a particular newsletter issue, we must receive it by the 15th of the prior month (example: June 15th for July issue).

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS is a non-sectarian, non-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3), Federal ID #45-4822283.

Facing the Triggers

By Doris Limnos

Yesterday was a day of triggers I did not see coming, and it was like a cruel punch to the gut. The kind that winds you, leaving you crawling on the ground and gasping for air. You know the ones...the triggers that hurt so bad there are no cries or words that sum it up. The kind that overwhelms you to spiraling and dizzying heights. I did not see it coming.

The Story

After having crippling nightmares about infant loss for the past two nights, I woke up to the news I had to go to support my sister who was facing a complication in her pregnancy. And of course, it had to be at THAT hospital. And of course, the staff coerced me to sit in THAT particular chair in the delivery suite, staring into THAT particular room. The one where I once lay flat on the bed, waiting for some sound to come from the monitor, begging despite the truth I already knew, pleading for my little girl to kick. Just once. THAT room, where all I heard was silence broken by the one apology and the escalating noise of my sobbing turned to wailing.

Then, of course, they took my sister to THAT ward, the exact same one where I spent 5 days with a butterfly on my door, holding my lifeless daughter, trying to rouse her with kisses and tears. THAT room, where there was no joy, the blinds didn't open, and I sat in the grey of despair, disbelief and disconnection. THAT room, now filled with the sound of my niece or nephew's heart echoing through the doppler.

And I crumbled. I bolted from that room, even though my dear sister needed me. But despite my running away, the feeling followed. It always does. There's no escaping it. And it got me in the guts, right where Lissie used to be, and it had me doubling over breathlessly in the carpark of the hospital.

Being present

It took every ounce of my energy to try to resist the fears and hold back the tears, to try to be there for my friend and to fight the feeling that overcame me. And in the end, that feeling always wins. So since I couldn't run from it, I decided to honour it, observe it, and give it the time it needed. I played some music, sat in my car, and wept bitterly. I let the sadness at the reality of my surroundings sink in- this needed my attention. In the hours that followed, I mourned my daughter all over again.

Yes, I relived the memories of the discovery of her death in every sterile hallway and bench seat, in every monitor and happy couple walking away with their baby. Almost four years on, yet it still feels so fresh. And it deserved this expression- *she* deserved this expression of my love.

I returned emptied to my sister's room. Both she and her husband, they just knew. There was no point hiding what it was. I was triggered. It isn't easy facing your triggers- and were it any other situation or any other person I would never have returned. But I did return, with a greater sense of catharsis, nostalgia and hope. Hope that she will have a very different experience. And love. Love for her and her baby. And love for mine too. This room, this bed, it holds greater significance for me now. Not to project or feel jealousy. Not to burden or fake the reality of my pain. But to make the air in this room thick with love and presence.

And we opened the blinds.

Originally posted on StillStandingMag.com

Writing Prompts for March's Newsletter Topic: "Grief Over Time"

In March's newsletter, we hope to feature the experiences of those in our community who are at different points during the loss journey. Grief does not go away but may change and evolve over time. How does this look at 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, 10 years, or even farther? We would like you to share your experience by answering these question prompts:

1. Give a one-two sentence description of the circumstances of your loss(es) and how long ago it occurred.
2. What does your grief currently feel like? How do you cope? How do you reach out for support?
3. How have you, your life, and/or your relationships changed as a result of your loss?
4. How do you connect to your baby(ies)? What are your rituals or ways to remember your baby(ies)?
5. What has surprised you about grief? What have you found most challenging?
6. Many ask, "When do you start to feel better?" Have you found that your feelings have changed over time?

Please aim for around 500 words total. If we cannot publish all submissions in March's issue, we will carry over into April. Your submissions make the newsletter much more meaningful to our community. Thank you. Submit to newsletter@briefencounters.org

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS MEETINGS

Our support group meetings are a safe place to talk about your child, your loss, and your grief. You are welcome to share, or just listen. A facilitator guides the meetings.

For more information or directions, please call 503-699-8006.

PARENTS OF INFANT LOSS & PREGNANCY LOSS, INCLUDING EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS

Out of consideration for other bereaved parents, we ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.

Meets the second Monday of each month, 7:00pm

February 11, March 11

Contact: Rachel Murfitt (RachelM@briefencounters.org)

This group also meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm

February 26, March 26

Contact: Daniele (DanieleR@briefencounters.org)

PARENTS OF PREGNANCY INTERRUPTION DUE TO MEDICAL REASONS

Out of consideration for other bereaved parents, we ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you. Meets the fourth Thursday of each month, 7:00pm

February 28, March 28

Contact: Heather (HeatherS@briefencounters.org)

PARENTS OF SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCIES, ADOPTIONS, & PARENTS TRYING TO CONCEIVE

Babies welcome. Meets the fourth Monday of each month, 7:00pm

February 25, March 25

Contact: Heather (HeatherS@briefencounters.org)

All meetings held at The Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Avenue, Portland

RESOURCES

Brief Encounters Online

WEBSITE

The Brief Encounters website www.briefencounters.org includes past newsletter issues, upcoming events and announcements, helpful links, numerous resources, support meeting information, etc.

TWITTER

@**briefencount** (twitter.com/briefencount) is the Twitter handle to follow for news and helpful links and information about pregnancy loss, infant death, and grief resources.

FACEBOOK

Brief Encounters Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support and *Brief Encounters Parenting After Loss* are the names of our private/closed Facebook mutual support groups. Because they are private, each group requires approval to join, and posts are hidden from anyone who is not a group member.

Please remember to take the usual precautions to protect yourself when using any social media outlets, keeping in mind that online communication is never completely private or secure. And remember that everyone who posts or reads will be in different places in their grief, so let's all be mindful and considerate. You can find articles about online safety with a quick online search. Be safe.

Counselor Referrals

Not all counselors are familiar with the issues that parents face after the death of their baby or during infertility treatment. If you feel like you would like to talk with a counselor, listed below are individuals who have been recommended to us by parents in the BE community.:

- ♥ Gaby Donnell, LCSW, Inner NE Portland
503-287-2295 www.mootherootscounseling.com
- ♥ Teni Davoudian, Ph.D., OHSU
503-418-4500 www.ohsu.edu
- ♥ Britta Dinsmore, PhD, SW Portland
503-913-4791 www.brittadinsmore.com
- ♥ Adria Goodness, CNW, PMHNP, SE Portland
503-224-3438 www.adriagoodness.com
- ♥ Rachel Starck, LPC, North Portland
503.929.2773 www.thethrivingmama.com
- ♥ Laurie Cox, LCSW, NE Portland
503-819-6354 mootherootscounseling.com/laurie-cox
- ♥ Lauren Marie Barthelemy, LPC, SE Portland
412-715-2391
- ♥ Debbie Bensching, MSW, LCSW, SW Portland
503-944-5032 DebbieBensching.com
- ♥ Tina Lilly, MS, Inner SE Portland
503-380-0424 www.foryouaremadeofstars.com
- ♥ Ava M. Stone, Ph.D., PC, SE Portland
503-279-8160 www.pacificcenter.org
- ♥ Tara May, PhD, Vancouver
360-904-1008 www.taramay.com
- ♥ Nalini Kuruppu MSW, LCSW, North Portland
503-753-9157
- ♥ Kari Maljai, LPC, SE Portland
503.936.7658 www.pnwbh.com
- ♥ Brooke Noli, MFT, Inner NE Portland
971-645-1180 portlandbirthcounseling.com
- ♥ Brynna Sibilla, LCSW, Inner NE
503-280-1101 www.psychotherapyportland.com
- ♥ Jennifer Singleton, PhD, PC, Downtown,
503-242-1558
- ♥ Lynne Phillips-Werbel, LCSW, Beaverton
503-690-9119 www.wildwoodpsych.com
- ♥ Audrianna J. Gurr, MS, NCC, SE Portland 503-522-6327
www.gurrtherapy.com
- ♥ The Dougy Center (for bereaved siblings)
503-775-5683 www.dougy.org

Editor's note: We would appreciate receiving suggestions, changes, or corrections to any of these resource listings; please send them to the editor at newsletter@briefencounters.org

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Support for bereaved parents of pregnancy and infant loss

2116 NE 18th Ave.
Portland, OR 97212

Message Phone: 503-699-8006

Web: briefencounters.org

Twitter: twitter.com/briefencount

Find us on Facebook

Nonprofit
Organization
US POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 546
Portland, OR

**Return Service
Requested**

Postmaster: Dated material, please do not delay

Triggers

Change of Address or Removal from Mailing List

Please contact our database manager Megan Wright at 503-646-1335 or by email at database@briefencounters.org.

Email Opt In

Brief Encounters is considering options for electronic delivery of our newsletter in 2019. If you prefer to have your newsletter delivered via email, please send your name, mailing, and email addresses with the subject "Email Opt In" to emailopt-in@briefencounters.org.
Opting in to the email newsletter will cease delivery of the paper version but continue inclusion of babies' names in Our Children Remembered.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

PARENTS OF INFANT LOSS & PREGNANCY LOSS, INCLUDING EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS

Meets the second Monday of each month, 7:00pm

February 11, March 11

This group also meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm

February 26, March 26

See page 7 for a detailed schedule

PARENTS OF PREGNANCY INTERRUPTION DUE TO MEDICAL REASONS

Meets the fourth Thursday of each month, 7:00pm

February 28, March 28

PARENTS OF SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCIES, ADOPTIONS, & PARENTS TRYING TO CONCEIVE

Meets the fourth Monday of each month, 7:00pm

February 25, March 25

All meetings held at The Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Avenue, Portland