

# Newsletter of Hope

## SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL SEEKS TO EXPAND REACH ACROSS THE COUNTY

After four years of convening as a mixed group of professionals and community stakeholders, the dedicated members of San Luis Obispo County’s Suicide Prevention Council are taking a new turn for goals and outcomes of suicide prevention for the Central Coast community. Under new leadership from the County of SLO Behavioral Health Department’s Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Alysia Hendry, the Council will act as an oversight committee for the development of a strategic plan.

A key element of the plan is to identify the unique needs of various groups of people across the county. As suicide rates are highest among adults aged 65+, this is one of the groups identified by the Council to have an individualized suicide prevention plan created specific to this population in SLO County. In fact, this newsletter is sponsored by the Council’s sub-committee for suicide prevention in older adults.

The Suicide Prevention Council is open to community members, mental and behavioral health professionals, educators, parents, and all who have a vested interest in preventing suicide in San Luis Obispo County. Starting in 2019, the Council will meet every 4th Wednesday of the month from 3:00-4:30pm. For more information, please email: [aahendry@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:aahendry@co.slo.ca.us).



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Community Spotlight.....**2-3**

Self-Care for Caregivers.....**4-5**

Information and Referral Services.....**6**

Events Calendar .... **7**

Community Member Spotlight.....**8-9**

Dear Abby..... **10**

Sponsored By:



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE





*"The group is contributing to the physical, spiritual, and mental well-being of members who feel less lonely as part of a social community."*

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Widowed Persons Association of California (WPACCSLO) meets the **second Saturday** of the month at 10:00am at:

Oak Park Christian Church

386 North Oak Park Blvd.  
Grover Beach,  
93433

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: WIDOWED PERSONS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

As we continue on life's journey, our lives may become less busy due to children being grown and gone, loved ones passing away, and a decline in physical and/or cognitive function. While depression is not a natural part of aging, loneliness and other contributing factors may certainly cause depression, and this can sometimes lead seniors to contemplate suicide.

One of the best remedies for loneliness is getting involved with a new social group! In fact incoming President Adrienne "Gigi" Garey of the Widowed Persons Association of California told us, "It's great to be able to be friendly and get out and about without waiting for an invitation."

The Widowed Persons Association of California (WPACCSLO) is a social group for widows and widowers of all ages. The youngest current member is 73, and is considered a 'young 'un' by the 90's crowd. We caught up with them at Olive Garden, one of the venues for their weekly Happy Hour which is a regular Tuesday gathering.

They were a lively bunch - filling two long tables and chatting while digging in to the \$8.99 early bird special. The manager and wait-staff were clearly familiar with the group and bantered as they kept glasses filled.



**Members of WPACSLO enjoy their Tuesday happy hour gathering at the Olive Garden**

WPACSLO has lots of activities throughout the month, in all areas of San Luis Obispo County. In addition to the Happy Hours, there are potluck and game nights, supper clubs, lunches, Sunday brunch, and local tours. Members become friends who help each other get to doctor's appointments and make sure everyone feels connected, one of the best protective factors against suicide attempts.

Mildreen Kirby (Parliamentarian), remarked "There were so many things you enjoyed doing when you had someone to do it with. Here you meet people to do things with again. I feel like we're a family. I've met people here over the last twenty years and we travel together all the time."

One is only able to be a member of WPACSLO if widowed and not remarried, so some members have been lost to remarriage, and the ratio of women to men is fairly high.

Cecelia Patereau loves cooking for the monthly Saturday morning general meetings and her crepes and bread are favorites of the group.

The group is definitely contributing to the physical, spiritual, and mental well being of members who feel less lonely as part of a social community.

If you are interested in joining this vibrant and active group, their website is <https://www.wpacslo.org/> or you can email [wpacslo@gmail.com](mailto:wpacslo@gmail.com) or call 805-773-0802 or 805-709-6747.

## **THE WIDOWED PERSONS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA**

Website:  
[www.wpacslo.org](http://www.wpacslo.org)

Email:  
[wpacslo@gmail.com](mailto:wpacslo@gmail.com)

Phone Numbers:  
805-773-0802  
805-709-6747

Article by:

Michelle Call  
Executive Director of  
GALA Central Coast  
[ed@galacc.org](mailto:ed@galacc.org)

## SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

In a professional life where we are supporting others in difficult circumstances, we can become overwhelmed. Caregivers are particularly vulnerable to burnout or compassion fatigue. This is a state of exhaustion that can affect the physical, emotional, and mental health of helping professionals. It is incredibly important that we learn how to stay grounded and take care of ourselves.



Symptoms of caregiver burnout include: feeling fatigued, loss of interest in activities or hobbies, a sense of hopelessness or despair, a general lack of energy, headaches, and irritability. The effects of caregiver burnout do not have to be permanent. You can find ways to cope with the stresses related to your professional caregiving. One way is to create and adhere to a self-care plan. Use your plan to keep yourself refreshed and decompress from tough cases.

---

***You can find ways to cope with the stresses related to your caregiving. One way is to create and adhere to a self-care plan.***

---

### Tips for Self-Care

- Reserve time for yourself to do what you love
- Volunteer at a pet shelter, four-legged friends can brighten anyone's day!
- Maintain a balanced, healthy diet
- Garden, or walk through a community garden
- Meditate—one conscious breath can start your meditation practice
- Create and maintain boundaries for yourself, remember there's only one of you!

## FINDING BALANCE

Research has demonstrated that we can only understand our self-care needs by looking at our many states of being. By creating a self-care plan, we are better able to cope with day-to-day and caregiving stressors. One method of self-care is called the bio-psycho-social-spiritual model. Simply put the model identifies the areas in our lives that require attention. One area of research claims that if we do something in each category for ourselves at least once a week, we will have the best outcome for our well-being.

**Biological:** The needs of your body (food, exercise, medical attention).

**Psychological/emotional:** internal balance ('taking care of business' like forgiveness and seeking joy).

**Social:** Your connections with friends and loved ones (nurturing the relationships that sustain you).

**Spiritual:** This is your relationship with the Sacred, however you define it (time in nature, prayer, meditation, etc.). I recommend you use these points to create your own weekly self-care plan.

Far from being selfish, self-care is the only way to keep yourself from burning out. We are all bombarded on a daily basis with expectations, demands on our time and energy, tough stuff on the news, work, family...your own list can go on and on. Do not wait until you feel overwhelmed; refresh yourself as often as possible. Be as kind to yourself as you are to others.



Article by:

Amy Halas Goff, MS  
Care Manager,  
Memory Care Specialist  
Visiting Angels of SLO  
agoff@visitingangels.com

## INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Information and Referral, or I&R, is a service that links people with community resources. A common definition is that I&R is an active process of linking a person with a need or problem with a service which will meet the need or solve the problem.

In San Luis Obispo, there are two types of I&R services. One is generic in that it has resource information about all populations. For example, **2-1-1**. The second type is specific to a select population. For example, **Senior Connection** specializes with information/resources for senior citizens and family caregivers.

Throughout San Luis Obispo County, one can find a free Senior Information Guide for senior citizens. This information guide contains many of the community resources that can help a senior citizen or family member find a solution(s) to issue being faced by older adults or family caregivers of older adults. For your free copy, contact the Area Agency of Aging at 805-541-0384

---

### ***Several local I&R services are available in San Luis Obispo County:***

- *Senior Connection — 805-541-0384*
- *Coast Caregiver Resource Center — 888-488-6555*
- *Independent Living Resource Center — 805-462-1162*
- *Long Term Care Ombudsman — 805-785-0132*
- *Tri Counties Regional Center — 805-543-2833*
- *United Way of San Luis Obispo — 2-1-1*

---

Don't live in SLO County? The follow I&R services can assist you:

- ⇒ *California Department of Aging — 1-800-510-2020 A call from anywhere in CA will be directed to the local Area Agency on Aging*
- ⇒ *Eldercare Locator — 800-677-1116 Provides I&R on senior services for callers anywhere in the United States*

Information brought to you by:  
Joyce Ellen Lippman  
seniors@kcbx.net

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### January 30:

*"Talk Saves Lives" A free suicide prevention presentation*

*4:00-5:30pm*

*Veteran's Memorial Building*

*801 Grand Ave. San Luis Obispo, 93401*

### February 6:

*"Journey of Hope" A free mental health promotion forum*

*6:00-8:00pm*

*New Life Community Church*

*990 James Way, Pismo Beach*

### February 25:

*"CommUNITY Connection" A free community event connecting people to local resources*

*1:00-4:00pm*

*Veteran's Hall, Morro Bay*

### March:

*"SLO Film Festival" Celebrating 25 years of Cinema on the Central Coast*

*Volunteer, attend, or both!*

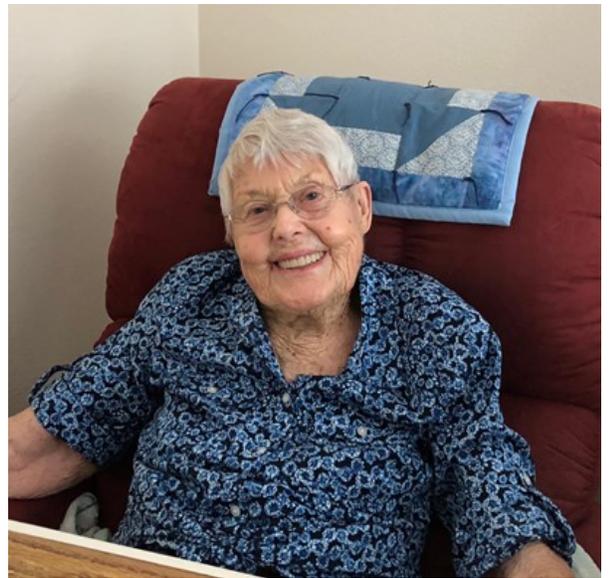
*March 12-17*

*Visit [slofilmfest.org](http://slofilmfest.org) for more details, or call 805-546-3456*

For more information about these events, email Alysia Hendry: [aahendry@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:aahendry@co.slo.ca.us) or call 805-781-1357

## COMMUNITY MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Sometimes our peers have the best knowledge and advice about life! We interviewed two San Luis Obispo Seniors — Sari Dworkin, Ph.D. of Pismo Beach and Margaret Halas who resides at The Villages.



*Margaret Halas*

### ***What things have you gained as you've aged?***

*Sari:* This may sound trite, but I've really learned not to sweat the small things. I'm much calmer and things that used to get my goat now roll off my back. I guess I've developed a much thicker skin. My relationship of twenty years is smoother and easier and I grow more and more in love. I don't feel that I have to prove anything anymore which also makes life easier. Friends are really important and I don't stand on ceremony about whose turn it is to contact whom. It's true that you gain wisdom as you age if you're open to it and if you're able to relax.

*Margaret:* There are fewer responsibilities now, which I greatly appreciate. I think I've also gained in wisdom.

### ***What are things you lost as you've aged?***

*Margaret:* My body. My physical health is not what it was and I can't do things I used to. I find it frustrating to ask for help doing things I was once able to do myself.

*Sari:* I'm not as physically and mentally sharp as I used to be. Pain is more frequent so I've lost the ability to stay blissfully unaware of my body. Unfortunately, I've lost friends and family to deaths.

Article by:

Michelle Call  
Executive Director of  
GALA Central Coast  
ed@galacc.org

## COMMUNITY MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### ***How do you maintain social connections?***

*Sari:* I call people. I email people. I visit when I can. Many of our friends live in different parts of California. I am on Facebook and that has connected me with old high school and college buddies that I have started closer contact with. I am active in groups: book discussion, hiking, social justice activist, and am active in my Reform Jewish Synagogue, Congregation Beth David and with SLO Atheists United.

*Margaret:* I like to participate in morning exercises in the facility. In fact, I won the walker I'm currently using in a raffle there! Once of the great things about The Villages is that there's so much going on all the time you don't need to be bored. There's always someone around for conversation!

### ***How do you combat depression in your everyday life?***

*Margaret:* I have a very deep faith so it's not a problem for me. I enjoy being by myself and I enjoy being with people.

*Sari:* I do struggle with moderate depression. I take antidepressant medication and have accepted the fact that I will be on my medication the rest of my life. Most days feel good. Sometimes the black cloud is small and I can distract with friends and activities. If the black cloud is larger I try to plan a quiet day, meditate and remind myself, sometimes over and over, that this will pass, and it always does.

### ***What would you like younger people to know about suicide prevention in the older population?***



*Sari Dworkin*

*Margaret:* It's not really something I worry about, but I think it's important to live your life, love God and do the best you can. Live your authentic life!

*Sari:* Older people do struggle with depression. For some, it's a life long, for others, it's a new phenomenon as losses accumulate. Younger people need to connect with older people. It's a win-win situation for everyone. Younger people should not be afraid to talk with older people about death and about suicidal thoughts and help older adults get the professional help they need when necessary.

OLDER ADULT  
SUICIDE  
PREVENTION  
COMMITTEE

The older adult suicide prevention committee is a newly formed group of community members, caretakers, and health professionals

**DEAR ABBY**

*Is depression a normal part of aging?*

While depression is common among older adults, it is *not a normal part of aging*. Believing that depression is inevitable prevents older people from seeking and getting the help they need.

Causes of depression include heredity, stressful events such as the death of a loved one, retirement, health problems, and reactions to medications. Drug interactions and alcohol and drug combinations can also lead to depression.

Depression can affect even the toughest, most resilient people.

If you think you might be experiencing depression, let your doctor know how you've been feeling. Be honest about your experience, including thoughts of suicide.

---

The Suicide Prevention Council meets every 4th Wednesday of the month. The Older Adult Suicide Prevention Committee meets every 4th Monday of the month. For more information or if you'd like to be on the email list for the council or committee, please email Alysia Hendry at [aahendry@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:aahendry@co.slo.ca.us) or call 805-781-1357



SPONSORED BY:



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

