



University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
One Robert Wood Johnson Place
MEB Third Floor #312
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Fall and Winter A Time of Reflection and Healing

A Candle for Your Child

Today you will light a little white candle
and say aloud your child's name.
For one fateful day, your life was changed.
The holidays will never be the same.

Today you will light a little white candle
and hang an ornament on a special tree.
Who would have thought you would be in this place?
Sharing your child as a memory.

Today you will light a little white candle,
a small gesture to some others.
Here we share the pain of our loss,
with Mothers, Fathers, Sisters & Brothers.

Today you will light a little white candle,
and as you gaze into the flame,
may comforting memories flood your mind,
as you proudly say your child's name.

Anonymous

 **THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all
children who have died

**Worldwide
Candle
Lighting®**

*... that their light
may always shine.*

**Sunday, December 9, 2012
7 PM Around the Globe**

SCNJ Staff



UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
One Robert Wood Johnson Place
MEB #312,
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
800-545-7437

The Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at
Hackensack University Medical Center
30 Prospect Ave.,
Hackensack, NJ 07601
800-704-7437

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The SIDS Center of New Jersey is a program of UMDNJ - Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Brunswick, NJ and the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center, Hackensack, NJ. The program is funded in part by a grant from the New Jersey State Department of Health to UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and a grant from the CJ Foundation for SIDS to the Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center.

SAVE THE DATE

JOURNEY OF GRIEF

**Wednesday, November 28
Hammonton, NJ
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

Please contact Linda Esposito, Ph.D., MPH,
MSN, APN-BC for more information at
esposili@umdnj.edu or 800-545-7437

JOURNEY OF GRIEF REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

**Sunday December 2
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.**

This is a time for remembering and sharing.
We invite you to bring expressions of love
(poems, songs, and readings) that you might
want to share with others.
If you would like these expressions of love to
be included in the program, please email them
to jgambrah@hackensackumc.org or fax to
201-336-8794 no later than **November 26.**

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN ONE OF OUR BEREAVEMENT GROUP MEETINGS

The purpose of a parent support group is to offer understanding, suggestions for coping, support, decrease in isolation, friendship, and most of all hope. It's a chance to talk about the events of your child's life and death, feelings related to the grieving process, reactions of others and concerns about subsequent or surviving siblings. Please consider attending one of the following or joining one on-line.

First Thursday of the Month:

Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Support Group.

Facilitator: Alissa Sandler, MSW, LCSW

The Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital; Hackensack University Medical Center, 30 Prospect Avenue, Hackensack, NJ. Meditation Room, 1st Floor, 7- 8:30 P.M. For information call: (201) 996-5131

Third Tuesday of the Month:

SIDS/Infant Loss Support Group. (English)

Facilitator: Anna Irizarry-Wood, MSW, LCSW; for information call: 1 (800) 704-7437; The Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital, at Hackensack University Medical Center, Hackensack, NJ. Room PC241, 7- 8:30 P.M.

Fourth Tuesday of the Month:

SIDS/Infant Loss Support Group. (Spanish)

Facilitator: Anna Irizarry-Wood, MSW, LCSW; for information call: 1 (800) 704-7437; The Joseph M. Sanzari Children's Hospital, at Hackensack University Medical Center, Hackensack, NJ. Room PC241, 7- 8:30 P.M.

SIDS/Infant Loss Support Group

Facilitator: Linda Esposito, Ph.D., MPH, APRN-BC, Newark, NJ (call 1-800-545-7437 for more information)

OTHER SUPPORT GROUPS IN THE STATE

Third Thursday of the Month:

The SUDC Program's Monthly Support Group (for families of children who were older than one year of age)

Held in North Jersey. For Information Call: 800-620-SUDC or go online at www.sudc.org

LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Dear Friends:

Each year, the Governor's Office of the State of New Jersey issues a Proclamation declaring October to be SIDS Awareness Month. As I prepare the new data that is used each year for the proclamation, I find myself reflecting on how far researchers have come, and, yet, on how much more needs to be accomplished. In 1992, nearly five-thousand infants died of SIDS in the United States. By 2007, the yearly deaths declined to fewer than 2,500. We applaud the lives saved, but we grieve for all the babies still dying.

Why have the numbers dropped? One reason is that since 1992, the American Academy of Pediatrics has been closely following research on sudden infant death conducted by scientists around the world. The academy uses this research, including ours in New Jersey, to identify conditions that make some babies vulnerable to a sudden infant death, especially SIDS. Researchers have not yet found ways to prevent or treat a vulnerable infant. However, they continually identify sleep settings that pose a greater risk to these babies. The goal of the American Academy of Pediatrics is to eliminate these risks. That may not be the perfect solution, but it is the best approach we have at this time. Through their efforts, we now know, for example, that babies are safer when they sleep without bed-sharing, when they share the parent's room but not their bed, when they are put to sleep on their back, and when pillows, quilts, and other loose and soft bedding are kept out of the crib. We've learned that sofas and adult beds are high risk places for babies to sleep. We know that babies should not be overheated and that nothing should ever cover a baby's face. From their latest recommendations we've even learned that bumper pads are no longer recommended and that while twins can share a room, they should not share their crib. The American Academy of Pediatrics has also found that most of the recommendations that reduce the risk for SIDS are also protective against a completely different cause of death, accidental suffocation. People are listening. In 1992, 70% of babies in America slept on their stomach. By 2000, only eight years later, 70% of American infants were put to sleep on their backs.

But more needs to be done. Researchers must learn more about what makes a baby vulnerable to certain bedding conditions, about how to determine which babies are vulnerable, and about how to treat these babies. Even more families need to adopt the safe sleep recommendations because the American Academy of Pediatrics has provided good evidence that they can help. Physicians, nurses, hospitals, child care centers, social service agencies and the media strive to inform parents about the safe sleep recommendations. But, the greatest resource may be a parent. Every one of us can be a teacher for another family. Parent to parent, grandmother to grandmother, friend to friend, we can share the safe sleep message.

As with every newsletter, we want you to know that you are in our thoughts and that we are here for you at all times.

Sincerely,

Barbara M. Ostfeld, PhD
Program Director

Light a candle for hope, for
remembrance. No matter where you are,
or which holiday it is for you, light a
candle for love, it is the greatest light of all.
- Darcie Sims and Andrea Gambill



IN OUR HEARTS

SIDS Family Services is updating the “in our hearts” remembrance wall to a digital picture frame. The digital picture frame will be taken to events such as memorials, conferences and health & safety fairs in an effort to educate the community about SIDS.

Mail photos to SCNJ-SIDS Family Services the Joseph M. Sanzari children’s Hospital at Hackensack University Medical Center, 30 Prospect Avenue, Hackensack, NJ 07601, or email your picture to Jgambrah@hackensackumc.org.

Please include with your photograph the name of your baby, date of birth and death, and if you give us permission to use the picture at the Annual Memorial, and educational events.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS! If you or your family is interested in volunteering for any SIDS Family Services Upcoming Event or would like to be involved in the planning or organizing process, please contact the SIDS Center at 1-800-704-7437 for more details.

PARENT ADVISORY EMAIL GROUP – SFS has a Parent Advisory Group that communicates via email on a regular basis. The purpose of the group is to generate ideas for upcoming special events that our families can attend. If you would like to become part of our Parent Advisory Email Group, please call the SIDS Center at 1-800-704-7437 or email Joyce Gambrah at Jgambrah@hackensackumc.org .

GOING GREEN

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, please send your email address to SCNJ@umdnj.edu. In addition to receiving the newsletter, email notifications will be mailed announcing events and memorial celebrations or other SIDS Center activities.

SCNJ WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Joyce Gambrah, BS

Hello Family and Friends of the SIDS Center of New Jersey, My name is Joyce Gambrah, and I am the new Program Assistant for SCNJ. I had the wonderful opportunity of meeting some of you this summer at the “Family Fun Day”. It was such a great pleasure to meet you and your families! For those I haven’t had the chance to meet with yet, I look forward to introducing myself to you at our upcoming events.

The SIDS Center over the years has a history of offering excellent events and resources to you which I hope to continue with your help. I would love to hear some feedback about what you have liked or would like to see at future events so please feel free to contact me at JGambrah@hackensackumc.org or 551-996-3219. I look forward to getting to know and work with all of you!

Jillian Consovoy, BSW

Hello families,

My name is Jillian Consovoy and I will be working with The SIDS Center of New Jersey as a social work intern for the upcoming year. I am currently studying to receive my Master of Social Work, with a concentration in children, youth, and family services, at Columbia University. I look forward to being a part of this organization and being a resource to you in any way I can. Please feel free to contact me at Jconsovoy@hackensackumc.org or 201-996-5365.

ONE MOMENT AT A TIME

Lisa Marain, MSW, LCSW

Senior Social Worker – The SIDS Center of New Jersey

Support Services Coordinator – The Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood Program [SUDC]

With the turn of each calendar page, the holidays will be here sooner than we realize. While the world is celebrating, many parents impacted by the death of their infant or child will be experiencing pain and sorrow. In my role as a licensed clinical social worker who works with bereaved parents since 1995, I have found that a vital key to coping is a philosophy I call: *One Moment at a Time*.

One Moment at a Time is a mindset for bereaved parents. It allows you to grieve at your own pace despite what you perceive society and others may be encouraging you to do. It is the ability to spend parts of your day remembering, crying, laughing, going to work, or carrying on your day without the fear of judgment from others. It is a tool to create a personal journey towards healing. Many parents who cultivate a personal grief process report feeling relieved that they do not have to follow a set timetable for grief. They also have reported feeling close to their child and better able to manage day-to-day grief.

For *One Moment at a Time* to work, bereaved parents need to seek out and surround themselves with compassionate and loving people who can support and empower them during their personal bereavement process. These personal connections — whether they involve a family member, a professional, or a friend — can lighten their daily struggles with pain and suffering. But what if the individual's pace of grieving does not match that of the spouse, family member, or friend — the very person that may provide the most support? One of the best ways to navigate this situation is open communication between both people. This is not always easy.

Grief will magnify the challenges that a relationship already faces and this conflict may affect one's ability to grieve successfully. A therapist or member of the clergy can be very helpful to families during these times. A therapist is trained to help families with a variety of therapeutic techniques that can teach communication, empowerment, compassion and empathy.

Movies, books and resources can also assist families in grieving.

To help those in grieving here are some strategies from people who have successfully developed their own personal grief journeys. Thank you to those SUDC family members who have shared so willingly!

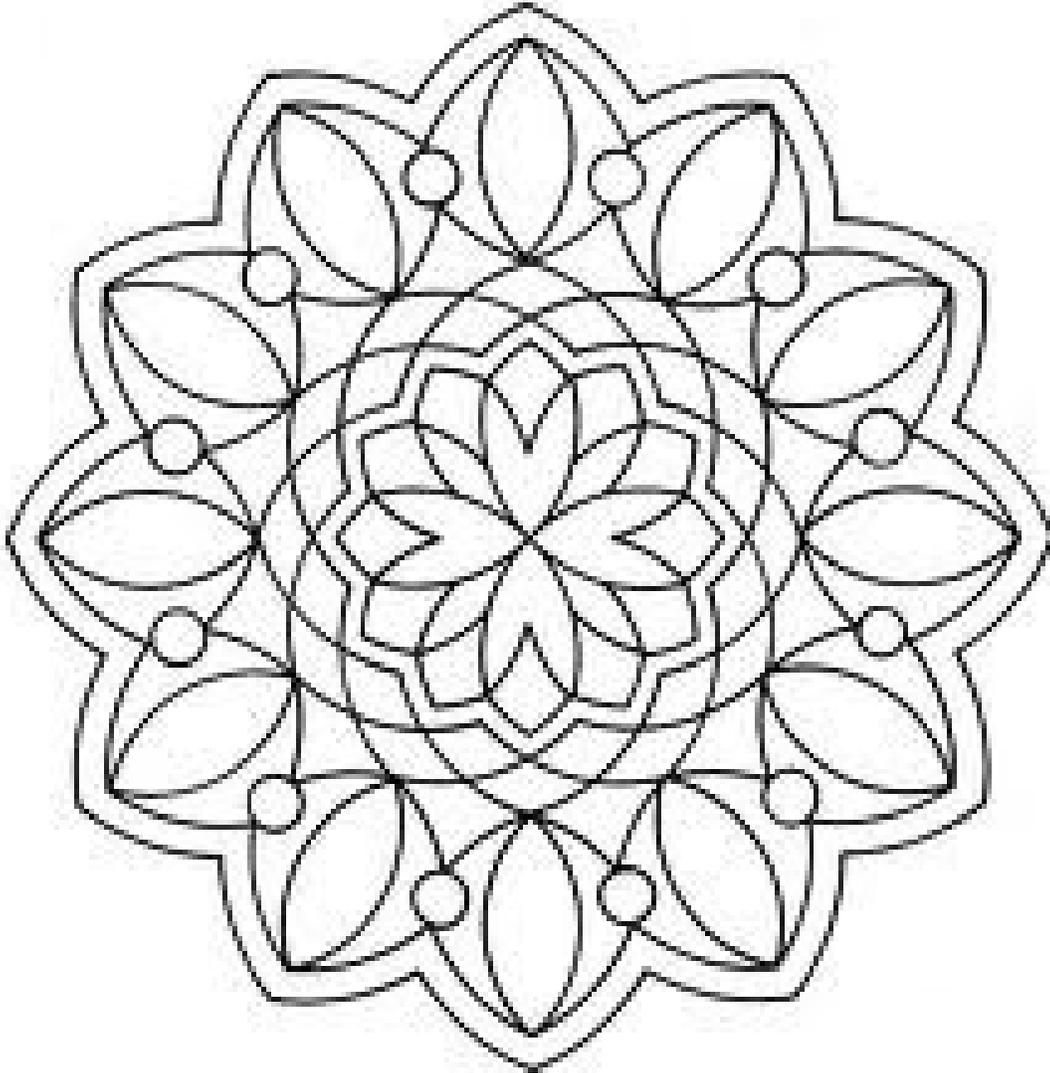
- ❖ Journal feelings, scrapbook memories, or blog, etc. Many parents have expressed their fear of others, or even themselves, not remembering their child's memory.
- ❖ Create a lasting memorial for your child, such as setting up a scholarship, planting a tree, starting a garden, or designing a website.
- ❖ Seek professional support, either individually or through groups.
- ❖ Encourage a new hobby.
- ❖ Use the child's name and speak about them as often as they like.
- ❖ Celebrate the child's birthday in a special and meaningful way to that family.
- ❖ Exercise. It is a stress reducer, energy enhancer and also releases endorphin chemicals which can combat depression. Encourage yoga. It is a way to calm the mind, find a focus, strengthen and stretch tense muscles. Yoga can help promote an overall sense of wellbeing.
- ❖ Get enough sleep- it will help restore the body and mind.

Not all of these strategies will work for every individual. Help each other to brainstorm to discover activities that may be a match for you. Taking grief *One Moment at a Time* brings comfort and helps the bereaved to create their unique successful grief journey.

MANDALA

Just as grief takes many forms; there is a multitude of ways to heal. During 2012-13 the SCNJ is exploring alternate or complimentary options of expressing grief.

A Mandala is a creative outlet of self-healing. Simply, it's a circle, a basic geometric shape that forms a continuous loop. Its internal smoothness creates a sacred space that's ready to receive your thoughts and intentions.



The word "Mandala" is Sanskrit for "whole world" or "healing circle." It's an intricate or simple design of colorful curved shapes with a prominent center.

Coloring or painting Mandalas provides comforting rhythmic activity; soothing relaxation and stress relief. It is felt that the beautiful drawings work on the subconscious to make you more centered and calm.

Using crayons or colored pencils color the Mandala above. Free Mandala coloring pages can be found at http://www.coloringcastle.com/mandala_coloring_pages.html

Healing Times

Issue II Fall and Winter 2012

SCNJ@umdnj.edu

www.rwjms.umdnj.edu/sids



HOLIDAYS REFLECTION AND HEALING

Best Wishes SCNJ

With the start of the fall season, days are getting shorter and darker and the cool morning air brings with it anticipation of the holiday season. Realize that this season may be different than it had been in the past. Holidays, which had heralded joy and celebrations in the past, may now be accompanied by feelings of loneliness, sadness, anger, and anxiety for many. Through the darkened days of this season, it is vital that families allow themselves to also see the light.

Light can be a symbol of life, hope, faith, as well as enjoyment. Christmas, Kwanzaa and Chanukah are all upcoming holidays that celebrate using light. As part of the “journey of healing”, try to use the light to help lead you through this most difficult season. Look again at your support systems- family, friends and faith and consider “rekindling” relationships that may have “burned low”. Share with family and friends what helps and what hurts. Utilize your support system to keep your light shining bright. You may want to pick and choose which events to attend. Acknowledge and accept the feelings you are having. Don’t let the expectations of others prevent you from meeting your own needs. Set some goals for yourself and plan ways to help you handle any potential uncomfortable situations.

Another very valuable part of the holiday season is the act of giving. To be able to reach out and help someone else in need can be a very rewarding, empowering, and inspiring experience. One of the most important people to give to is you. During this season, be sure to nurture yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually. After the loss of a baby, many people neglect themselves and often feel guilty taking care of their needs. When done in memory of your baby, the act of giving, including to yourself can be an even more powerful experience than ever before.

The SIDS Center of NJ is here to help. In addition to a 24-hour, 7 days-per-week hotline, (800) 545-7437, we also offer other bereavement services.