

# Pioneer Valley/Hampden County MA Launches 7 Month wellness Workshop Series for Families Impacted by Suicide

*7 month peer-to-peer wellness workshops for family and close friends emotionally impacted by the suicidal crisis of a loved one*

SPRINGFIELD, MA, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2021 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- The aftermath of a catastrophic event – a tornado, a hurricane, an earthquake, tend to bring out the best in humanity. Neighborhoods and entire communities come together as never before. Complete strangers reach out to help each other through the challenging, emotional darkness.

But when the perceived catastrophe is a personal tornado, hurricane or psychological earthquake as the result of a loved one’s suicide attempt or other mental health crisis, there is no outpouring of compassion and support.

“

It’s the Oxygen Mask Axiom. You must take care of yourself first before you can support others”

*Annemarie Matulis*

You stand alone. Terrified.

“And as the family and close friends of suicide attempt survivors and others in suicidal crisis, you struggle to find

your own way free from the anxiety and stress, darkness and anger, frustration and a sense of helplessness...to find your way to the path of freedom from that fear. It’s the Oxygen Mask Axiom. You must take care of yourself first before you can support others,” noted Annemarie Matulis, Founder of the Impacted Family & Friends movement.

In August, A Voice at the Table delivered two informational livestreams to introduce the families and health-care providers in Pioneer Valley/Hampden County. The intent was to identify the content of the upcoming peer-to-peer innovative wellness workshop series in addition to the



**Impacted Family & Friends  
Finding Inner Peace Workshops**

For family & close friends emotionally impacted & traumatized by the suicidal crisis of a loved one

Saturday, Sept. 18, 10am to Noon ET  
This is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 8 workshops from Sept-Dec. Attend one or all. Zoom webinar – all participants will be at the table & on screen

Registration is required:  
[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_CZjTxPq0Tj2n5P0-Z7nr0Q](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CZjTxPq0Tj2n5P0-Z7nr0Q)

A collaborative project of A Voice at the Table, the Pioneer Valley Coalition for Suicide Prevention & the MA Department of Mental Health

Wellness workshop

who, what, how and why these workshops. These Impacted Family & Friends programs have been in place in Massachusetts since 2014 and are now available in several other states.

A Voice at the Table/Impacted Family & Friends movement co-founder Annemarie Matulis will be joined during each workshop by seasoned facilitators. On the 18th, that will be Steve Palm, a suicide loss survivor and impacted family member, and Joseph Marques, a 19-year-old suicide attempt survivor and impacted family member, who leads our Gen-Z task force.

Is This the Night: Finding Inner Peace is a roundtable workshop format that will gently guide participants through what some might call a spiritual and emotional inventory that will offer suggestions on how to better recognize our own behaviors and attitudes and make minor or, in some cases, major changes. This is nothing new. It's just another way to experience that turnaround to step away from fear and find inner peace and emotional balance.

Sometimes self-care does not always mean sit quietly, close your eyes, and breathe deeply. Sometimes the only path to finding your own quiet place in the sunlight is through a spiritual self-inventory, a house cleaning of sorts. This Finding Inner Peace livestream will reflect a sampling of some wellness

check exercises that can help clear the emotional clutter out to allow inner peace to find its way in. For example: Do you keep a scorecard (some call it a hit list)? Have you found yourself stomping into the sandbox lately? Did you realize that control does not = Love? Are you struggling with forgiveness? Do resentments rule? Am I emotionally balanced today? Is there



Wellness Workshop Table



Pioneer Valley  
Coalition for  
Suicide Prevention  
[masspreventssuicide.org](http://masspreventssuicide.org)

Pioneer Valley



A Voice at the Table

something more I need to be doing?  
Am I at peace within?

The exercises outlined in these workshops may not be “the” answer to the quality-of-life wellness challenge for this huge population, but they offer a starting point to begin to tear down the walls fear has built and develop new soul-care skills that can bring some inner peace within while walking through a difficult emotional challenge.

It is important to always keep in mind that the Finding Inner Peace Workshops are not counseling or therapy. It is a peer-to-peer format that is described in the original grant funding as “new and innovative.” It is also important to maintain a comfortable and casual atmosphere throughout the series. There will be moments when the sharing exchange may be serious or sad. There will be just as many times where laughter will rule.

WHO: Anyone who has been emotionally impacted by a loved one’s suicidal crisis.

WHAT: A Zoom-based interactive workshop

WHEN: Saturday, September 18th, 10:00 am to Noon ET

TO REGISTER: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_CZjTxPq0Tj2n5P0-Z7nr0Q](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CZjTxPq0Tj2n5P0-Z7nr0Q)

The second September workshop will be held on September 28th, 7:00 pm ET, For the access link: [director@avoiceatthetable.org](mailto:director@avoiceatthetable.org)

These wellness workshops will be held twice a month from September through December and will resume from January to March. This project is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health.

For the Media: Responsible reporting on suicide, including stories of hope and resilience, can prevent more suicides. Please visit the Suicide Reporting Recommendations for more information. For additional information, please visit [SuicideReportingToolkit.com](http://SuicideReportingToolkit.com).

The mission of the Pioneer Valley Coalition for Suicide Prevention is to create an inclusive collaboration of public and private agencies, community members and people with lived experiences working together to promote healthy communities by supporting strength-based practices that reduce the risk of suicide.



Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pvcsp/>

About A Voice at the Table: A Voice at the Table was founded in 2014 as a companion to the documentary, A Voice at the Table, a call to action to bring the lived experience voices of suicide attempt survivors to all tables within suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. As a grassroots movement, it has since expanded and become the national "home base" forum for the family & friends emotionally impacted & traumatized by the suicidal experiences of loved ones. A movement: a group of people working together to advance their shared ideas. A forum: a place, meeting or medium where ideas and views on a particular concern can be exchanged, in this case, nationally and internationally. <http://www.avoicethatthetable.org/index.html>

For more information about this 7-month series: [director@avoicethatthetable.org](mailto:director@avoicethatthetable.org)

Annemarie Matulis

A Voice at the Table

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