



2011/Jan 18

Re: “Collateral Damage: Images of Those Left Behind by Suicide”

The topic of death by suicide is important, but difficult to raise for thoughtful public comment. It is too easy to retreat into silence due to grief, shame and fear of sensationalist headlines. Nevertheless, death by suicide remains a major social issue which needlessly kills over 3000 persons each year in Canada – too many. And for each who dies by suicide, many others are touched by this abnormal death, and then need to deal with their own suffering.

The “Collateral Damage: Images of Those Left Behind by Suicide” project is one way to bring the topic of suicide into awareness in a thoughtful and respectful manner. It allows the discussion of the impact of suicide, the ripples which continue for years without any sensational headlines or particular focus on the manner of death. I believe it invites the community to consider what we can do to change ourselves to help more people before they get to the point of considering suicide, as well as those bereaved by suicide. This is the kind of public debate which is required, one on one, quiet but meaningful consideration.

I fully support “Collateral Damage: Images of Those Left Behind by Suicide”, and hope that others will endorse and promote this project as one means of bringing the topic of suicide to attention. I believe it invites discussion without increasing the problem of stigma. Indeed, one of the primary signs of stigma is forced silence, and it is time we talked.

Respectfully,
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