

**SAMM**National

Support After Murder and Manslaughter

**August 2023**

# Newsletter

Support After Murder and Manslaughter

L&DC, Tally Ho!

Room G39,

Pershore Road, Edgbaston

Birmingham, B5 7RN

**Helpline: 0121 472 2912**

**Mobile: 07342 888570**

**Website: [www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)**

**Email: [info@samm.org.uk](mailto:info@samm.org.uk)**

Charity Number 1000598

## A word from our Chair, Rose Dixon



Hello everyone. I am standing in for Marie Ellis our chairperson as she has had to take a step back due to personal reasons. Marie has been our chair (sometimes known as the stool!) for many years and is having a well deserved break just now. She is a hard act for me to follow but I will do my best for you, our amazing SAMM members.

I hope you are all coping with the unpredictable holiday weather we are having just now. The children are off school and that can cause problems for some of us as we struggle with childcare. It can also be hard as we remember happy holidays we had in the past with that special someone we have lost to violence. Please be gentle with yourselves as you try to cope with everything that is thrown at you by life. Sometimes things happen and they appear to have no relation to the loss of our loved one but they can knock us off kilter because feelings of shock or being out of control key into those feelings that we had when we first lost our special person. If you are struggling then please get in touch with the office and ask for some extra help. **Rose Dixon—Chair**

## A word from our CEO, Jo Early



Summertime seems like the perfect opportunity to spend time outside and allow nature to help with our own health and well-being, so I hope you are able to find time for yourselves during those difficult moments.

Appreciating nature, including wildlife and green spaces can be positive and healing so I hope you can take a moment to find your nearest green space for a moment of calm and reflection. It's a busy time at SAMM as we have several events for you to look forward to after the summer, so we hope you can attend and feel part of the SAMM community. This year will be the first year we mark National Remembrance Day for Victims of Homicide. We will be holding a memorial event in Birmingham to honour all victims and it will also be an opportunity for the bereaved community to meet and network. This is a free ticketed event so please contact the office for more details.

Our Annual Memorial Service will take place on Saturday 9th December at St Martin in the Fields, London. We hope you can join us to light a candle for your loved one and meet other families over refreshments.

At team SAMM we have also been busy in the background working with the government to ensure the Victims Bill truly represent the needs of bereaved families. The Committee stage of the Bill has now closed, and we will be submitting further evidence to the House of Lords to ensure it covers the needs of the bereaved. This is a critical stage to push for change therefore if you have any points, you want us to raise, please contact us.

We recently launched our Life Sentence' research report in the House of Commons which was a great success. Thank you to all SAMM members who took part in the survey. It was important to repeat the original survey from Baroness Louise Caseys original Review of the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide in 2011, as we were able to compare the results.

The full report is available on our website here <https://samm.org.uk/living-on-one/research/>

Remember our door is always open if you need help and support. **Jo Early—CEO**

# Fundraising

Julie, Jenny, Billy and a group of friends and family completed the 3 peak in 24 hour challenge, spurred on by the generous donations they had received for SAMM. There were a few issues along the way (Billy having to fix the bus, thunder and lightning on Scafell pike and trying to sleep on the world's most uncomfortable bus!) But it was an amazing experience and we were all so pleased to complete it and raise the money for SAMM. We also scattered some of Joanna's ashes the top of each peak so she was there with us too.



<https://justgiving.com/fundraising/sammthreepeaks>

## Donate & Fundraise

SAMM relies on donations and with your help we can provide the support needed for those affected by raising much needed funds. **Ways to donate:**

- **Send a cheque made payable to SAMM**—we can claim gift aid on your donation.
- **Ebay**—we are a listed charity you can support when selling on eBay.
- **CAF**—Charities Aid Foundation.
- **PayPal & PayPal Giving Fund**—donate via PayPal or PayPal Giving Fund.
- **Direct Debit**—speak to the office to arrange.

We can help you get started with fundraising. Any questions please phone us on: **0121 472 2912**, text **07342 888570** or email **[info@samm.org.uk](mailto:info@samm.org.uk)**



giftaidit

ebay

CAF  
Charities Aid Foundation



PayPal

PayPal  
Giving Fund

# House of Commons Event

We recently published our report titled *Life Sentence: Understanding the Experiences and Support Needs of Those Bereaved by Murder and Manslaughter*. The survey which formed the report was a replication of Baroness Casey's (2011) research into the needs of families bereaved by homicide.

We were able to compare the results from the first survey published in 2011 to see if people's experiences of the criminal justice system had changed.

The report was launched in the House of Commons to a cross section of attendees from the criminal justice system. The event was sponsored by Jonathan Edwards MP and we give our thanks to him for supporting the launch. We also extend our thanks to Baroness Louise Casey for her support and speech and to Mandy Jamieson for bravely talking about her experience of the criminal justice system after her son Daniel was killed.

We would also like to thank our members who bravely took part in the survey and to Dr Lauren Bradford Clarke and Dr Laura Hammond for producing the report.

You can read the full report by clicking on the following link

<https://samm.org.uk/living-on-one/research/>

- Here is a summary of the main findings from the report (2023)
- The impacts on those bereaved by homicide are extensive and long-lasting – it is a 'life sentence'. Mental and physical wellbeing are notably impacted, as well as family/personal relationships and work/schooling. Issues in relation to all of these were noted by the majority of respondents.
- The experiences and needs of those in the present sample did not differ significantly from those found in the original Casey (2011) survey, suggesting that time, money and efforts are still not being used as effectively as they perhaps could be.



- Whilst things have improved post 2010, those bereaved by homicide have extensive support needs which aren't effectively being met by current support provisions.
- Different people find different forms of support more helpful at different stages post- bereavement.
- Some services are viewed as being more helpful/ valuable than others; varying needs are met to differing degrees by different provisions. Therefore, options of support at different times should be available.
- More training and awareness amongst criminal justice partners is needed to understand the effects of murder when coming into contact with bereaved families.
- The labelling of bereaved families as secondary or 'indirect victims' at times renders them powerless in their ability to participate in criminal proceedings, with them instead being restricted to little more than members of the public.
- The need for experiential-based information is crucial. Families often feel their 'human rights' (as they are framed) are lesser than those of offenders; the offender is living, the victim has been robbed of life; the offender is entitled to legal representation, the victim none; trials are conducted in the name of the offender, not that of the victim (see Rock, 1998; Bradford, 2020).
- While families identify the need for practical support, for many, the preference is for emotional support to be offered by peers who have also experienced homicide bereavement, due to the perceived inability for 'outsiders' to know or understand the processes underpinning bereavement through such circumstances (Bradford, 2020).



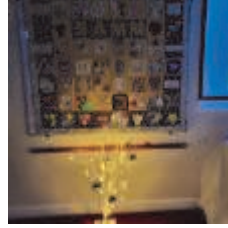
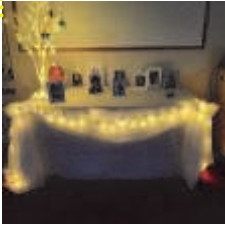
- There seems to be a disconnect between what is being provided and what those bereaved need in the aftermath of a homicide. In fact, when it comes to some experiences, notably court proceedings, there seems to have been a compounding of negative impacts since 2010.



- The financial burden in the aftermath of homicide was noted in the original Casey (2011) report. Continuing issues over cost were evident in responses received here, particularly costs associated with court attendance and paying for transcripts etc.
- Traumatic bereavement takes an extensive physical, mental and emotional toll. Broader forms of more targeted support may be appropriate and/or necessary as a key element of support provision for the homicide bereaved.
- Many of the persisting issues identified in this report centre around a continuing lack of understanding and recognition that complex grief processes run alongside a lengthy, complex and traumatic criminal justice process. Therefore, one of the key findings here is the need to provide support that, at its simplest, considers the complexities surrounding traumatic loss. The need to recognise the experiences of homicide bereaved people not only as victims, but also as bereaved – the two processes are inextricably linked.
- Victimisation and subsequent criminal justice experiences cannot be separated from one another. The view that the bereaved are stuck in their own victimisation, further indicates that the lasting effects of homicide bereavement are exacerbated by a sense of injustice and voicelessness through criminal justice processes.
- We do need a voice, we do need to talk about how we're treated when it happens and I just think that you know these people [those who support] need, you know, they need to learn and they need to hear our voices, you know and they just don't understand (Katrina (bereaved in 2014), in Bradford, 2020: 222).



# June Empowerment Weekend



A total of 20 people benefitted from the retreat in June which was great considering there was a train strike that weekend. They came from across the country including Lincolnshire, Wales, Merseyside and London. There was a Creative Workshop as well as sessions on Stress and Trauma, Health and Well-being and Relaxation.

*'Very very good. I met people that really understand my situation and non-judgemental. I am glad I and my daughter attended as we are not alone. Met new people who contributed towards my healing process, knowing that I am in the right path.'*

*'Feel more relaxed was feeling nervous when I first came feeling a bit better'*

*'Really enjoyed the chats and listening to other stories and feeling glad I'm not struggling alone. Thank you.'*

*'Lovely weekend with some amazing and inspirational people'*

*'Thought it was lovely place very relaxing and calming and Jo, Rose, Marie and others were very sociable friendly made me very welcome especially it being my 1st time and instantly made me feel OK. Think all the Trustees are amazing and they do a lovely fantastic job with SAMM x'*

*'Invaluable—a rare chance to relax and find peace. The retreat staff are wonderful. SAMM Gang—kind, understanding and supportive'*

## **2023 Empowerment Weekend Dates**

1st-3rd September / 10th-12th November

## **2024 Empowerment Weekend Dates**

7th-9th June / 6th-8th September / 8th-10th November

## *Thought of the day*

*"Stay positive. Better days are on their way."*

# SAMM Online Pop-Up Cafés



Our Pop-up Cafés are very popular and we have lots of positive feedback about the support they provide to our members. The sessions are a chance to share your thoughts and feelings whilst being supported by others with similar experiences. If you would like to book a space on the online session please get in touch.

**Women's - Tuesday 7-8pm / Men's - Wednesday 7.30-8.30pm booking is essential, call or email the SAMM office to book your place.**

"Yes, I found comfort in knowing that others also struggled/continue to struggle to focus at work and anxiety is a major part of their day."

"I realised we are all asking the same question why?"

"Group always helps me to feel less alone and alien. Reminders of strategies for coping."

"There were individuals there who I felt aligned with and when I mentioned things that were upsetting me I could really see that they understood as they felt the same. It felt less lonely but it also reminded me of how awful the world can be. I'm glad I attended."

"Found it very useful with lovely people who have also gone through similar grief."

Provides job prospects.

"It was surprising that I'm not alone in the way I feel"

"Despite everyone's different circumstances the similarities in how we are feeling is a comfort and that we can understand each other."



# Volunteer Profile—Sally Miles

## 1. What is the best thing about volunteering for SAMM?

Lots of kindness was shown to me and I wanted to give something back!

## 2. Describe SAMM in three words.

Understanding / Experienced / Warm

## 3. How long have you volunteered for SAMM?

2-3 years.

## 4. Where is your happy place?

In my garden I like to mess around with plants and dirt and there is always something to do.



## 5. What is something people don't know about you?

I like to dance around the kitchen if the music is right - I love a kitchen disco!

## 6. Have you met anyone famous?

When I was at school, I shook hands with Group Captain John Cunningham who commanded the Comet's first flight on his 30th birthday.

## 7. What's the best advice you have been given?

Keep calm and carry on!



## 8. Where is the best place you have visited?

Top of Mount Sinai - it's an amazing place and I saw the dawn come up! I was an extraordinary and memorable experience!

## 9. What do you do to relax?

I like to read, spend time in the garden and watch comedy on TV.



## 10. What is your favourite food?

Chocolate - plain 70% I have a square after my evening meal with a cup of tea!

A quote that means something to Sally - *'not in the mood to be a person'*.

# Volunteers Wanted!

We are looking for Telephone Supporters and Pop-Up Cafe Facilitators to join our team.



## Why volunteer for SAMM?

1. Do you want to support people?
2. Is SAMM important to you and did it help you?
3. Do you have any spare time?
4. Can you fit volunteering around your lifestyle?
5. A SAMM phone is provided so you are not out of pocket.
6. Remote and flexible volunteering to suit your life.

You will be helping transform the lives of other bereaved people by using your unique experience and understanding. Volunteering is linked to better physical, mental and emotional health. It keeps you in contact with other people and feeling more socially connected can reduce stress, depression and isolation.

**The benefits of volunteering go both ways—helping others can be the best way to help ourselves!**

Provides you with a sense of purpose.

Improves self-esteem.

Make a difference to someone.

Teaches you valuable skills.

Gain confidence.

Meet new people.

Increases your social skills.

Good for your health.

Provides a sense of community.

Full training and support is provided. For more information and a registration form contact:  
Sarah McGrory - Officer Co-ordinator E:[info@samm.org.uk](mailto:info@samm.org.uk) T:07342 886672/0121 472 2912

If you can receive this newsletter via email please contact the office: [info@samm.org.uk](mailto:info@samm.org.uk)

# Relaxation & Stress Toolkit



- Deep breaths—helps the mind think clearly and the body to slow down.
- Laugh out loud—has a positive effect on stress-busting hormones.
- Take a sniff—breathe in the aroma of lavender to reduce agitation.
- Record thoughts—write your thoughts and reactions to slow your thinking.
- Eat a healthy meal—don't skip meals and enjoy healthy snacks.
- Be active—go for a walk around the block and enjoy nature.
- Sleep—get at least 8 hours sleep and make your bedroom tranquil and relaxing.

**Remember self care is not selfish – it's essential!**



***We are looking for contributions for the newsletter e.g:***

- Poems that you have written or that mean a lot to you.
- Quotes that you find helpful and supportive.
- Fundraising - are you raising any funds for SAMM
- How has SAMM supported you?

## Corporate Sponsorship

See our website for details [www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)



[www.securesafe.co.uk](http://www.securesafe.co.uk)



[www.mindfulmemorials.co.uk](http://www.mindfulmemorials.co.uk)



[www.wealarms.co.uk/](http://www.wealarms.co.uk/)

## Memorials & Tributes

If you have a tribute you would like to add to the newsletter, our website or the Memorial Book please contact the SAMM Office.



**SAMM Trustees:**

Marie Ellis (Chair)  
Marie Wright (Vice Chair)  
Rose Dixon (Secretary)  
Avi Royle (Treasurer)

Sylvia Smithies

David Reid

Steve Williams

Rob Kellas

**Staff Members:**

Joanne Early—CEO

Sarah McGrory—Office Co-ordinator

Vacancy—Office Administrator

Thank you for staying in touch with us. As a valued SAMM member this is **your** newsletter. We would love some feedback and suggestions for future issues. We are also keen to receive tributes and poems that we can include in future newsletters and on our website.

**The SAMM Team**

Support After Murder and  
Manslaughter  
L&DC, Tally Ho!  
Room G39,  
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# HELPLINE

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