



ADVANCE ILLUSTRATION/PENNY WOLFE

Added Compassionate Friends member Sylvia Breitberg of Willowbrook, whose 33-year-old son committed suicide three years ago: "They saved my life. In spite of the overwhelming support of family and friends, you can't continue to burden them, but I know that they (group members) are there for me every month."

Explained psychologist Sullivan: "You raise a child for two reasons — to be happy and to be successful when they reach adulthood. But parents don't have ultimate control. Every parent has to reach the point where he has to let go ... For some parents, sadly, it

happens a little earlier."

But reason does not wash away the pain.

"It goes against nature," said Mrs. Gabrielline. "You plan to die before your child. All you want for him is to have a productive, good life. You don't realize how much a part of your daily life he is. And then you lose him. It's like losing part of yourself."

"At the moment of death, when people are in shock, there is nothing you can say to them," said the Rev. Paul Meiners of Salem Evangelical Free Church, West Brighton. "It's a matter of being there, expressing concern. That

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— Peggy Gabrielline, whose son died in a car accident seven years ago.

doesn't mean I don't open the Scriptures, but they won't be open to a lot of advice."

Continued the pastor: "It just takes time to rebuild your life ... From my theological perspective, God is a god of love, of mercy. He has a plan that we may not understand. I tell them, 'God still loves you. He's here and I'm here.'"

The Rev. Henry Gentile of Holy Family R.C. Church, West Brighton, the Schweiger's family priest shared his thoughts: "If the parents are loving Christian people, they will accept it more readily ... It's God's will. When people have a belief, whatever it is, they help each other through it."