“After my cardiac arrest, it was months before I was emotionally ready to reach out to others and address what happened. For a while, I would only share my experience with another survivor from my state.

Soon, I discovered SCAA and learned I wasn’t alone. From the personal connections I made with other survivors and advocates to the educational resources, I found support, strength and encouragement to live and enjoy life again.”

– Mary, SCA Survivor
Surviving cardiac arrest is rare. For the 6 percent of patients who do survive, recovery is often a long process that simply doesn’t end after discharge from the hospital, or with the insertion of an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD).

FACTS OF LIFE AFTER SCA AND/OR ICD IMPLANTATION
- A large number of SCA survivors experience varying degrees of impairment in performing daily life skills
- Many experience symptoms of anxiety after cardiac arrest
- One-third of patients with ICDs require coping skills to address fear of potential shocks
- Typical adjustment period can take 6–12 months
- A large number of SCA survivors are diagnosed with psychological issues, including adjustment disorder, panic disorder and/or major depression

SCA and ICD implantation is often traumatic for survivors but also can be life-changing for their loved ones. In fact, it’s common for both survivors and family members to experience challenges adjusting to life after cardiac arrest. Many report anxiety, withdrawal, various fears, loss of interest, guilt, loneliness, depression, inability to relate to others and concerns about becoming a burden.

ICDs and other devices can monitor the heart and prevent future cardiac arrests, but they can’t heal emotions, calm anxiety or ease fears.

That’s where the SCAA and its nationwide network of SCA survivors, resources and advocates can help.

WHO IS THE COPE LINE FOR?
The COPE Line is for survivors of SCA and ICD implantees and family members of either group. It offers an opportunity to speak with someone who has survived sudden cardiac arrest and/or ICD implant.

WHO WILL YOU TALK WITH?
The caller will not receive medical advice, but will be able to talk with someone familiar with many of the issues surrounding both situations.

WHY THE COPE LINE?
Simply stated, there is a greater chance of making an emotional connection when talking with someone than when reading an online response. Personal conversation increases the chance for in-depth communication, clarifying answers and healing through human connection. COPE mentors have years of experience in talking with peers about issues common to our unique group. This peer-to-peer communication has proven very useful to survivors and implantees as well as to family members.

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?
Go to suddencardiacarrest.org, click COPE at the top of the page, then click on the cell phone illustration. Read the instructions for leaving a message on the COPE Line and other helpful information on how the process works. You can also call the COPE Line number above to receive instructions on how to proceed.

OTHER RESOURCES
Visit INSPIRE, where SCAA connects survivors and patients on our interactive online community.

SCAA COPE LINE
1-855-COPE-SCA
(267-3722)

Mary Tappe, Chair, Board of Directors
Mtappe@suddencardiacarrest.org

Richard Brown, Executive Director
Rbrown@suddencardiacarrest.org

If you are interested in starting a SCAA chapter in your area, getting involved in a local chapter, looking for resources related to SCA support, the COPE program, a hero recognition program, making a donation or information regarding any of the programs offered through SCAA, please contact:

Mary Tappe, Chair, Board of Directors
Mtappe@suddencardiacarrest.org