



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Offering friendship and understanding to Bereaved Parents, Siblings
and Grandparents
Johannesburg Chapter
April 2016

TCF Centre Address: 122 Athol Street Highlands North Johannesburg 2192

E-mail: tcfsa@mweb.co.za Fax: 086-203-2355

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org.za

Telephone (011) 440-6322 P O Box 323 Highlands North 2037

In This Issue:

Editorial

All mankind is divided into three classes: those that are immovable, those that are moveable, and those that move. Arab proverb.

Things I wish

Dear Friends

Birthdays

In my experience of bereavement most of us fit into each class at different stages of our grief.

Painting
Workshop

Initially the shock and agony of loss numb us. We are not able to move out of this state, and I don't believe we should be forced to try and change too soon. Neither should we feel guilty that we are stuck, we've suffered terrible trauma and recovery takes a great deal of time and effort. How much time and how much effort is an individual thing. It only becomes a problem when we are too stubborn or too scared to venture beyond our pain to seek the relief that eventually leads to finding ourselves once more. We may feel that progress means disloyalty to the memory of our loved children and siblings, but affirming our lives does not equal denying theirs. On the contrary, the way we choose to live from now on should be in glowing honour of those we've lost.

Anniversaries

Expiration Dates

Snippets

Hardest Thing

Suicide Survivor

How to achieve this stage, how to find the help to move, becomes the next hurdle. There are scores of ways: counselling, reading, meditation, prayer, communicating, engaging, are some of them. Whatever works effectively for you is right for YOU.

Thanks

None of these aids is exclusive, what is fine now may not be appropriate later, and there is no harm or shame in rejecting and seeking anew if that's what you need. The most important factor is that you are open to learning about grief and prepared to tackle the effort it takes to manage both sorrow and recovery. The thing is do not remain the perpetual student, recognize the time to graduate.

Notices

Book Reviews

Once you've reached that level you are a mover. You may never become active in counselling but the very proofs of your courage, patience, determination and strength are an inspiration to others. Your experience and non-judgmental kindness are unbelievably encouraging to those who now stand where once you did, uncomprehending of their situation and unable to accept that they and that situation can and will change. In that quiet way you too are the heroes and heroines of TCF.

Kind regards

Rosemary Dirmeik
The Compassionate Friends

Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me about Grief

No matter how prepared you think you are for a death, you can never be fully prepared for the loss and the grief. **You** can plan for death, but death does not always comply with our wishes or plans. **Stop** avoiding and be present. **Dying** is not like you see on TV or in the movies. It is not peaceful or prepared. **You** may not have a spiritual or meaningful moment . . . It's too real. **A** hospital death is not always a bad death. **A** home death/hospice death is not always a good death. **There** will be pressure from others to move on, even minutes or hours after a death, and this can lead to regrets. **Death** is not an emergency – there is always time to step back and take a moment to say goodbye. **Death** and grief make people uncomfortable, so be prepared for awkward encounters. **You** will plan the funeral while in a haze. If you aren't happy with the funeral you had, have another memorial service later. **When** people offer support, take them up on it. **People** will bring you food because they don't know what else to do. Don't feel bad throwing it away. **People** will say stupid, hurtful things without even realizing it. **People** will tell you things that aren't true about your grief. **Death** brings out the best and the worst in families, so be prepared. **There** is no such thing as closure. **There** is no timeline for grieving. You can't rush it. **You** will grieve, in some form, forever. **There** will always be regrets. **No** matter how much time you had, you'll always want more. **Guilt** is a normal part of grief. **Anger** is normal part of grief. **The** pain of a loss is a reflection of love, but you never regret loving as hard as you can. **Grief** can make you question your faith. **Grief** doesn't come in 5 neat stages. **Grief** is messy and confusing. **Grief** makes you feel like you are going crazy. **Grief** can make you question your life, your purpose, and your goals. And that isn't always a bad thing. **We** all grieve differently, which can create strain and confusion between family members and friends. **However** badly you think it is going to hurt, it is going to be a million times worse. **You** may find comfort in much unexpected places. **You** should go somewhere to debrief after care giving. **The** last 24 hours of their lives will replay in your mind. **Trying** to protect children from death and the emotions of grief isn't helpful, **it's** sometimes necessary to seek out new ways to grieve on your own, find new guidance, if the people who are supposed to be supportive simply haven't learned how. **You** grieve your past, present, and future with that person. **Big** life events and milestones will forever be bittersweet. **Grief** triggers are everywhere – you will see things that remind you of your loved one all over the place, and it may lead to sudden outbursts of emotion. **You** lose yourself, your identity, meaning, purpose, values, and your trust. **Holidays**, anniversaries, and birthdays will be hard forever. **People** will tell you what you should and shouldn't feel and how you should and shouldn't grieve. Ignore them. **The** grief process is about not only mourning the loss, but getting to know yourself as a different person. **There** is no normal when it comes to grieving. **Sometimes** it gets worse before it gets better. **It** is normal to feel numb after it happens. **The** tears will come. They come in waves. **Grief** can make you feel selfish and entitled, and that's okay (at least for a while). **Meeting** new people, who never knew the person who died, can be hard and sad. But eventually it can be nice to "introduce" them through stories and photographs. **The** practice of sending thank you notes after a funeral is a cruel and unusual tradition. **People** love to judge how you are doing. Watch out for those people. **You** can't compare grief or compare losses, though people will try. **Any** loss you grieve is a valid loss, though people will sometimes make you feel otherwise. **Just** because you feel pretty good one day it doesn't mean you are cured of your grief. **There** are many days when you will feel totally and completely alone, whether you are or not. **Grief** can make you do stupid, crazy things. **They** may be what you need at the time, but you may regret them later. **Cut** yourself some slack. **Grief** can make you a stronger person than you were before. **Grief** counselling doesn't mean you're crazy or weak. **It** is okay to cry sometimes. **It** is okay NOT to cry sometimes. **Time** does NOT heal all wounds. **Grief** rewrites your address book. **Sometimes** the people you think will be there for you are not. **People** you never expect become your biggest supporters. **You** don't get over it, you just get used to it. **It** is okay to tell people when they are not being helpful. **Watch** your drinking– alcohol can quickly become an unhealthy friend. **You** will have to face your emotions eventually – you can avoid them for a while, but they will catch up with you in the end. **Talking** isn't the only way to express and process emotions. **You** will never go back to being your "old self". Grief changes you and you are never the same. **Nothing** you do in the future will change your love for the person who died. Eventually you will begin to enjoy life again, date again, have another child, seek new experiences, or whatever. None of these things will diminish your love for the person you lost.

May you have a blessed and peaceful Easter.

Softly ... May Peace Replace Heartache and May Warmest Memories remain

**Wishing you a day of Peace on the Anniversary of Your Child's Birthday
April 2016**

Luke Tibbetts 2.4.2011 Beloved son of Candice Tibbetts and Angelo Meyer and brother of Matthew Tibbetts

John Van Der Walt 4.4.2011 Beloved son of Brienne and Caoilfhionn Van der Walt and brother of Etienne, Louw, Robert

Machoma Barry 4.4.2013 Beloved son of Hellaine and Matthew Barry and brother of Hannah-Jayne and Mitchell

Khomoyami Lecoge 5.4.1975 Beloved daughter of Kgomotso and William Lecoge and sister of Brian, Phonzi and Lesego

Glen Truter 5.4.1973 Beloved son of Lynette Truter and brother of Sean

Russell Lamb 5.4.1987 Beloved son of Sue and Ted Lamb and brother of Brian

Samantha Alex Stapley 8.4.1973 - Beloved daughter of Peter and Jean Jones

Paul Dixel 10.4.1984 Beloved son of Rainer and Sue Dixel and brother of Candice

Liam Gartland 11.4.1971 Beloved son of Terry Gartland and brother of Patrick

Gabriella Giacobazzi 11.4.1988 Beloved daughter of Adriana and Michele Giacobazzi and sister of Danilo

Nompumelelo Mbana 13.4.1977 Beloved daughter of Doreen Mbana

Brett Nerwich 14.4.1982 Beloved son of Harold Nerwich and brother of David, Craig, Russel:

Donovan Lester Naicker 14.4.1979 Beloved son of Joey Chame

David Schonknecht 15.4.1986 Beloved son of Leon and Allison Schonknecht and brother of Linda

Tiveshen Mari 17.4.1984 Beloved brother of Tineesha Mari

Michael Letsosa 18.4.1982 Beloved son of Fara and Philip Letsosa

Zaem Gangat 18.4.2015 Beloved son of Ilaam and Naeem Gangat and brother of Taqiyh and Taskeen

Andrew Lohr 20.4.1968 Beloved son of Stan and Dorothy Lohr and brother of Kevin, Marc and Paul

Suyari Naidoo 21.4.1989 Beloved granddaughter of Sally Naidoo and sister of Krisan and Neel

Nikki Reabow 22.4.1987 Beloved daughter of Glenn Reabow

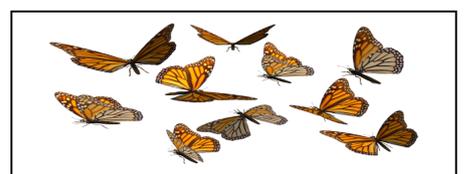
Dean Richard Moreira 23.4.1984 Beloved son of Richard Moreira and brother of Natalie

Mark Staessen 24.4.1981 Beloved son of Guido and Marleen Staessen and brother of Barbara

Bele Davhula 25.4.2010 Beloved daughter of Rofhiwa Yvonne Davhula

Lesedi Sibuseso Chiloane 25.4.2014 Beloved son of Marcia Chiloane and brother of Lesego Ntokozo

Omphile Khumalo 26.4.2014 Beloved daughter of Lerato Khumalo



Bilal Haffejee 26.4.1983 Beloved brother of Rehana Acoon

Tamplin-Rowe Ferreira 26.4.1977 Beloved son of Cathy Scott and brother of Claryn Ferreira

Jason Olivier 26.4.1993 Beloved son of Gavin and Sonja Olivier and brother of Jonty

Philip Briggs 28.4.1973 Beloved son of Peter and Judith Briggs and brother of Guy and Alexandra

Bayanda Lwandile Ntobeko 29.4.2014 Beloved son of Alphiwe Sithole

Martin May 30.4.1975 Beloved son of Molly May

Rebecca Suttner 30.4.1987 Beloved daughter of Nadine and Marc Suttner and sister of Sam, Jake, Brian and Ross

This page is lovingly sponsored by Ingrid and Hans Ahrens in memory of their son Arne.

The Compassionate Friends, like a lot of other well known NPOs, is finding it challenging to raise funds. We will be having Fund Raising initiatives this year and will need your help please. I know when you are grieving the thought of going places and doing things is sometimes daunting

A few ideas for you to help us ... so we can keep helping you...

If you do not want to attend the painting workshop, for example, please forward information to someone who would – they do not need to be bereaved to attend

If you don't want to come to any of the Theatre/ Barnyard functions please encourage your family and friends to attend.

Please consider making a monthly donation to TCF via debit order/stop order – every cent helps.

Please get and use a My School/My Village Card and make The Compassionate Friends a beneficiary.

If the Company/Organisation you work for has a Social Responsibility Department and you would be comfortable for us to contact them on your behalf to ask for a donation please send us the details.

WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR HELP. THANK YOU.



The Johannesburg Chapter of: Compassionate Friends

Painting Workshop



Date: 2 April 2016
Time: 14h00
Location: 122 Athol Street
Highlands North

Join us for the first of many fun painting workshops at TCF. We will be painting Butterflies under the guidance of Kate Shand. Please book as there is limited space. R350.00 per person. All materials will be supplied. Tea and coffee will be served.

Penny: 011 440 6322

TCF Johannesburg Chapter
First National Bank; Balfour Park
Branch code: 212217
Cheque Account No
50360007395
Please use your name and paint as a reference when paying.

Author unknown

There is no footprint too small to leave an imprint on this world.



shutterstock - 15739520

Ermes De Cillia 1.4.2010 Beloved son of Debbie and Ercole De Cillia and brother of Flavia:

Joanna Haden-Smith 3.4.1991 Beloved daughter of Jo and Sally Haden-Smith and sister of Callie, Robert and Laura:

Barry Eberlin 3.4.1986 Beloved son of Stan Eberlin and brother of Karen and Jeff

Waylon Block 3.4.2011 Beloved son of Heinrich and Sandra Block and brother of Carbin and Croypon

Michael Cilliers 5.4.2013 Beloved grandson of Gill and Rob Goodall

Michael Cilliers 5.4.2013 Beloved son of Richard and Karen Cilliers and brother of Amy

Clive Holdsworth 6.4.2002 Beloved son of Peter and Natalie Holdsworth

Princess Ncube 11.4.2015 Beloved daughter of Bonakele and Ian Ncube and sister of Nomthandazo, Sisasenkosi, Siyabonga

Lathitha Likhwezi Dzanibe 12.4.2014 Beloved daughter of Amanda Onele Dzanibe

Luthando Nxesi 12.4.2008 Beloved son of Nombulelo Nxesi and brother of Lungelo and Xoliswa:

Philip Briggs 13.4.1990 Beloved son of Peter and Judith Briggs and brother of Guy and Alexandra

Mlamli Malunga 16.4.2015 Beloved son of Innocentia Malunga and brother of Wildanson & Asakhe

Alan Bates 16.4.2009 Beloved son of Kathy Cooles

Mikhail Herman 16.4.2009 Beloved son of Michael and Delyth Herman and brother of Nicole

Zaeem Gangat 18.4.2015 Beloved son of Ilaam and Naeem Gangat and brother of Taqiyh and Taskeen

Wikus Havenga 24.4.2013 Beloved son of Salome and Wikus Havenga and brother of Mariette, Marelize, Mariaan and Karla

Luke Mackrill 24.4.2015 Beloved son of Ainsley and John Mackrill and brother of Liam

Arne Baumgartner 25.4.1997 Beloved son of Ingrid and Hans Ahrens

Xoliswa Nxumalo 29.4.2006 Beloved daughter of Gascoyne and Sylvia Nxumalo and sister of Sibusiso:

Erica Holgate 29.4.2014 Beloved sister of Lisa Budford

Albert Swart 14.5.1985 - 29.4.2006 Beloved son of Greer Swart and brother of Juanita, Shane and John

Nanayaa Angela Osei-Tutu 30.4.2012 Beloved daughter of Tony and Mahlape Osei-Tutu

Nanayaa Osei-Tutu 30.4.2012 Beloved sister of Mpho Osei Tutu

Bjork Mollgaard 30.4.2006 Beloved son of Erwin and Petronella Mollgaard and brother of Sven and Annika

One day we will remember
how lucky we were to have
known their love, with
wonder, not grief.

Expiration Dates by Lynne B. Hughes

Certain things need an expiration date. Milk, eggs, mayonnaise, meat, fish... there is a time we need to be done with them, and throw them away... I get all that. But does grief have an expiration date? For some reason, there seems to be an acceptable shelf life—6-12 months—and then grief should be off the shelf, out of the home and permanently removed with the weekly trash service.

If only it was that simple...

The "grief expiration date" myth must come from people who have never experienced a close death – otherwise they would know the truth. Everyone fears facing such a loss. They are hopeful that should death touch their world, it will only take 6-12 months to recover. No one wants someone they love to die. So, until faced with the reality, it's easier to think 'this won't happen to me, AND if it does it will only be bad for a finite, short amount of time and then...there's an expiration date and it is magically all gone.' What a wonderful world that would be.

I've heard time and time again there is a societal expectation to "get over" grief in 6 months, and at the longest, a year. Those who aren't grieving believe it, and often those who are also believe it – this sets grieving people up for false, and ultimately disappointing, expectations.

The one year mark looms like some golden carrot over the heads of those who are grieving. It is a symbol of hope that if they make it to the one year mark they will be in a much happier and pain free place.

The reality is they won't be over it, nor should they be. If someone spent years loving another person, the pain of that person's death simply will not be removed due to a date on the calendar.

The opposite actually might happen – people who are grieving may feel even more pain in year two because the initial numbness, which often serves as a protective barrier at the onset of loss, has worn off and they begin experiencing the full intensity of their feelings and grief. This is accompanied by the realization that life with loss is their "new normal."

I lost my mother at 9 and father at 12. I remember feeling the expectation of a grief expiration date myself. I remember being 15, five years after my mother died and three years after my father died. If I had a tough day missing my parents, people looked shocked, or avoided the subject, or avoided me. Sometimes I would hear insensitive comments, like "aren't you over that?" Or when someone experienced a more recent loss, I would get "Oh, poor [so and so]. What a tragic loss. Aren't you glad you are over that now?"

I remember beating myself up and doubting how well I was coping. If you allow yourself to believe there is an expiration date for grief, you will start to think you aren't doing well if you still miss your loved one 5, 10, 20, 40 years after the loss. In reality – it's normal. And it's okay.

This is what I know to be true:

Grief IS a life-long journey. An emotional handicap you get up, and live with everyday. It doesn't mean you can't lead a happy life, but it is a choice, and takes work.

The frequency and intensity of those grief pangs/knives should lessen over time, but the reality is every now and then for the rest of your life, you will feel those pangs. Everyone grieves at their own pace, and in their own way. There is no one way to grieve, and no certain order, and no timeline. There is definitely not an expiration date.

Grief will take on different forms in different people. Not everyone cries; others cry all the time. Some exercise a lot. Others talk about it a lot. Many seek counselling or join a support group, and enjoy the company of a good and understanding listener.

If years after your loss, thinking of your loved one, missing a special day or milestone in your life, makes you sad, puts you in a funk, or makes you cry, don't beat yourself up. Allow yourself the ability to grieve the loss of memories not created. As long as the frequency and intensity of grief eases—even if it is slowly over time—you are coping in positive ways. Alternatively, if years after the loss, you can't bear the mention of your loved ones name, you sleep all day, you aren't participating in your normal everyday activities, you do things to "numb" or escape your grief, those are warning signs that you are not coping well, and should seek the assistance you need to begin healing.

Grieving in a healthy manner, taking steps to move forward, and rebuild your life with a new normal, doesn't mean you won't have those tough days or tough moments.

There is no expiration date. Grief never fully goes away. That doesn't have to mean you can't and won't live a happy and productive life. What it does mean is the love you shared with loved ones lost doesn't have an expiration date either.

I recently submitted a statement to my local support group newsletter.

“What I have learned during the first two years of grief”.

-The first year I learned how to scream and cry on the outside.

The second year I learned to scream and cry on the inside.-

The meaning I guess is clear and I wonder how many agree with me. During the first year of grief, all I could do was cry and scream. I could not accept this had happened to my son and our family. During the first year, people were concerned and talked about Phillip and what had happened and when would we get justice? But after the first year, it seemed all the concerned people were gone. No one asked anymore about my son nor did they want me to talk about him. It made them uneasy. This is when I learned to cry and scream inside. The only true people who understand are the people that are travelling the same road of grief and to my sadness this road seems to be getting more crowded. I do not know what this 3rd year of grief will bring for us, hopefully we will see some justice for Phillip's murder I believe this will have to happen before we can start healing. I continue to keep my son's name alive in every way I can. I find if I can work on projects that are in memory of Phillip or any project concerning Phillip it helps me keep making it one more day. If you have tips on “Ways of Coping”, I would love to hear them.

Peace for another Day. Debbie M.O.M.S website. <http://www.moms.memorial-of-love.net/>

You're Still Here

At the finest level of my being,
you're still with me.
We still look at each other,
at that level beyond sight.
We talk and laugh with each other,
in a place beyond words.
We still touch each other,
on a level beyond touch.
We share time together in a place,
where time stands still.
We are still together,
on a level called Love.
But I cry for you,
In a place called reality.
Richard Lepinsky

We wanted to write
down exactly what
it is like to lose a
baby, but for some
reason the page
stayed empty.

And we could not
have described it
any better.

- sayinggoodbye.org

Eupsa ge ke tsena mojakong wa
legodimong,
Ka ekwa ke le ka lapeng/gae,
Ge Modimo a ntebelela fase ebile
amemiela,
A le kua setulong sa gagwe sa gauta sa
maemo,
Are, 'mo ke gosafeleng le tsohle ke go
tshepisetsego tsona'
Lehono bophelo bja gago lefaseng bo
fetile,
Moo bo thoma ka leswa,
Ga ke tshepise bosasa,
Eupsa lehono go tla dula go le bjalo,
Bjalo nke o tseye letsogo la ka o phele,
Bophelo moo legodimong le NNA,
Bjalo ge, ge eba bosasa bo thoma ntlele
nna,
O se nagane gore re arogane ka kudu,
Ka gore nako le nako onkgokpolago,
Ke gona moo pelong ya gago,
Kea ao rata!

They avoid speaking of
your child to keep
from upsetting you.
They do not realize that
no one ever speaking
of them is your biggest fear.

momies with angel babies Shell

This will likely be the hardest thing you'll ever do. Survive this. And eventually, maybe even thrive again.

At times it will feel virtually impossible. You'll wonder how a human being can survive such pain. You'll learn you know how to defy the impossible. You did it from the moment your child's heart stopped, and yours kept beating. You do it with every breath and step you take. You're doing it now.

Your fingernails will become bloodied from clawing your way from the depths of despair. Your spirit will grow weary from fighting to survive. Your eyes will cry more tears than you ever thought possible. Your arms will ache an ache for which there aren't words, for a lifetime.

Your heart will break into a million tiny pieces. You'll wonder how it will ever mend again. But with every morsel of unspeakable pain, there is love, an abundance of love. A love so strong, so powerful, it will buoy you. You will not drown.

Others will say things that are intended to be helpful, but aren't. Take what is, leave what isn't. Still, you'll meet others along the journey who will get it, without ever saying a word. Kind souls who will breathe you back to life again. Let them.

Years down the road you'll tire of hearing the same advice and clichés, over and over again. Advice you don't want or need. Everyone will try to tell you how to best "fix" your broken heart. The trouble is you don't need fixing.

There is no fix for this.

Eventually you'll learn how to carry the weight of this pain. At times it will crush you. At other times you'll learn how to shoulder the burden with newfound grit and grace. Either way, you'll learn how to bend with the weight of it.

It will not break you. Not entirely. And even if you don't believe in hope – not even a little – hope will light the way for you. At times you won't realize your path is lit. The darkness feels all consuming when you're in it. But know the light is there, surrounding you.

Know you're being guided, by all of us who have survived this impossible hell. You may not hear us, or see us, but we are with you, beside you. Hand in hand, heart to heart, always. Just like your child still is. Above all else, know that no one can save you but yourself. You are the heroine/hero of this sad story. You are the one who gets to decide how, and if, you'll survive this. You are the one who will figure out a way to survive the sleepless nights, and the endless days. You are the one who will decide if and when you'll find a purpose again that means something to you. You are the one who will choose how you'll live with the pain. You are the one who will decide what you'll cling to, what will make your life worth living again. You, and only you, get to decide how you'll survive. No one else can do this for you.

People will speak of "closure," of "moving on," of "getting over it," of grief coming to an end. Smile kindly, and know, anyone who says these things hasn't lived this thing called grief. To lose a child is to lose the very heart and soul of you. It is overwhelmingly disorienting. It takes a long, long time to find yourself again. It takes a long time to grow new life around the chasm of such grave loss. It takes a long time to grow beauty from ashes.

There will always be a hole in your heart, the size and shape of your child. Your child is absolutely irreplaceable. Nothing will fill the void your child left. But your heart will grow bigger– beautifully bigger– around the empty space your child left behind.

The love and pain you carry for your precious child will be woven into every thread of your being. It will fuel you to do things you never dreamed you could do.

Eventually, you'll figure out how to live for both of you. It will be beautiful, and it will be hard. But, the love you two share will carry you through. You will spread this love everywhere you go. Eventually, you'll be able to see again. Eventually, you'll find your way again. Eventually, you'll realize you survived.

Helping a Suicide Survivor Heal *by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.*

Historian Arnold Toynbee once wrote, "There are always two parties to a death; the person who dies and the survivors who are bereaved." Unfortunately, many survivors of suicide suffer alone and in silence. The silence that surrounds them often complicates the healing that comes from being encouraged to mourn. Because of the social stigma surrounding suicide, survivors feel the pain of the loss, yet may not know how, or where, or if, they should express it. Yet, the only way to heal is to mourn. Just like other bereaved persons grieving the loss of someone loved, suicide survivors need to talk, to cry, sometimes to scream, in order to heal. As a result of fear and misunderstanding, survivors of suicide deaths are often left with a feeling of abandonment at a time when they desperately need unconditional support and understanding. Without a doubt, suicide survivors suffer in a variety of ways; one, because they need to mourn the loss of someone who has died; two, because they have experienced a sudden, typically unexpected traumatic death; and three, because they are often shunned by a society unwilling to enter into the pain of their grief.

How Can You Help?

If you want to help a friend or family member who has experienced the death of someone loved from suicide, this article will guide you in ways to turn your cares and concerns into positive action.

Accept the Intensity of the Grief

Grief following a suicide is always complex. Survivors don't "get over it." Instead, with support and understanding, they can come to reconcile themselves to its reality. Don't be surprised by the intensity of their feelings. Sometimes, when they least suspect it, they may be overwhelmed by feelings of grief. Accept that survivors may be struggling with explosive emotions, guilt, fear and shame—all well beyond the limits experienced in other types of death. Be patient, compassionate and understanding.

Listen with Your Heart

Assisting suicide survivors means you must break down the terribly costly silence. Helping begins with your ability to be an active listener. Your physical presence and desire to listen without judgment are critical helping tools. Willingness to listen is the best way to offer help to someone who needs to talk. Thoughts and feelings inside the survivor may be frightening and difficult to acknowledge. Don't worry so much about what you will say. Just concentrate on the words that are being shared with you. Your friend may relate the same story about the death over and over again. Listen attentively each time. Realize this repetition is part of your friend's healing process. Simply listen and understand. And, remember, you don't have to have the answers to his or her questions. Simply listening is enough.

Avoid Simplistic Explanations and Clichés

Words, particularly clichés, can be extremely painful for a suicide survivor. Clichés are trite comments often intended to diminish the loss by providing simple solutions to difficult realities. Comments like, "You are holding up so well," "Time will heal all wounds," "Think of what you still have to be thankful for" or "You have to be strong for others" are not constructive. Instead, they hurt and make a friend's journey through grief more difficult. Be certain to avoid passing judgment or providing simplistic explanations of the suicide. Don't make the mistake of saying the person who completed suicide was "out of his or her mind." Informing a survivor that someone they loved was "crazy or insane" typically only complicates the situation. Suicide survivors need help in coming to their own search for understanding of what has happened. In the end, their personal search for meaning and understanding of the death is what is really important.

Be Compassionate

Give your friend permission to express his or her feelings without fear of criticism. Learn from your friend. Don't instruct or set explanations about how he or she should respond. Never say, "I know just how you feel." You don't. Think about your helping role as someone who "walks with," not "behind" or "in front of" the one who is bereaved. Familiarize yourself with the wide spectrum of emotions that many survivors of suicide experience. Allow your friend to experience all the hurt, sorrow and pain that he or she is feeling at the time. And recognize tears are a natural and appropriate expression of the pain associated with the loss.

Respect the Need to Grieve

Often ignored in their grief are the parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, spouses and children of persons who have completed suicide. Why? Because of the nature of the death, it is sometimes kept a secret. If the death cannot be talked about openly, the wounds of grief will go unhealed. As a caring friend, you may be the only one willing to be with the survivors. Your physical presence and permissive listening create a foundation for the healing process. Allow the survivors to talk, but don't push them. Sometimes, you may get a cue to back off and wait. If you get a signal that

this is what is needed, let them know you are ready to listen if, and when, they want to share their thoughts and feelings. Cont/.... **Understand the Uniqueness of Suicide Grief**

Understand the Uniqueness of Suicide Grief

Keep in mind that the grief of suicide survivors is unique. No one will respond to the death of someone loved in exactly the same way. While it may be possible to talk about similar phases shared by survivors, everyone is different and shaped by experiences in his or her life. Because the grief experience is unique, be patient. The process of grief takes a long time, so allow your friend to proceed at his or her own pace. Don't criticize what is inappropriate behaviour. Remember that the death of someone to suicide is a shattering experience. As a result of this death, your friend's life is under reconstruction

Be Aware of Holidays and Anniversaries

Survivors of suicide may have a difficult time during special occasions like holidays and anniversaries. These events emphasize the absence of the person who has died. Respect this pain as a natural expression of the grief process. Learn from it. And, most importantly, never try to take the hurt away.

Use the name of the person who has died when talking to survivors. Hearing the name can be comforting and it confirms that you have not forgotten this important person who was so much a part of their lives.

Be Aware of Support Groups

Support groups are one of the best ways to help survivors of suicide. In a group, survivors can connect with other people who share the commonality of the experience. They are allowed and encouraged to tell their stories as much, and as often, as they like. You may be able to help survivors locate such a group. This practical effort on your part will be appreciated.

Respect Faith and Spirituality

If you allow them a survivor of suicide will "teach you" about their feelings regarding faith and spirituality. If faith is a part of their lives, let them express it in ways that seem appropriate. If they are mad at God, encourage them to talk about it. Remember, having anger at God speaks of having a relationship with God. Don't be a judge, be a loving friend. Survivors may also need to explore how religion may have complicated their grief. They may have been taught that persons who take their own lives are doomed to hell. Your task is not to explain theology, but to listen and learn. Whatever the situation, your presence and desire to listen without judging are critical helping tools.

Work Together as Helpers

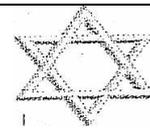
Friends and family who experience the death of someone to suicide must no longer suffer alone and in silence. As helpers, you need to join with other caring persons to provide support and acceptance for survivors who need to grieve in healthy ways. To experience grief is the result of having loved. Suicide survivors must be guaranteed this necessity. While the above guidelines will be helpful, it is important to recognize that helping a suicide survivor heal will not be an easy task. You may have to give more concern, time and love than you ever knew you had. But this effort will be more than worth it.

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Following our recent survey and acting on the feedback we are receiving there will be a section of the newsletter dedicated to submissions by our members. Please send your contributions to tcfsa@mweb.co.za. Thank you.

*I do not ask that you forget your dear departed.
I want you to remember. I only ask that you
remember more than the moment of death, more
than the funeral, more than the house of
mourning. Remember Life! Remember the whole
life, not the final page of it.*

By Rabbi Maurice Davis



*To all our Jewish friends
we extend sincere greetings
during the time of Passover*

THANK YOU



Grateful appreciation to all who brought refreshments for the Meeting

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! For donating to TCF. Thank you to our members who pay monthly via debit orders.

Thank you to our members who have recently signed up with My Village and to those who use their My Village Cards!

Thank you to all our Members who have paid their Subs!

Love Gifts Given

In loving memory of Rob Simms and Bryan Simms by Lillian Simms, Stephen and Claire Moller

In loving memory of James Norman Young by Dave and Liz Young

In loving memory of Ermes De Cillia by Debbie and Ercole De Cillia



We will be hosting a painting workshop on Saturday 2nd April at TCF. All art materials will be supplied and Kate Shand will be on hand to guide you. There are limited places available so please book well in advance. The cost of the afternoon will be R350. Please book/get more information by calling the office 011 440 6322 : email tcfsa@mweb.co.za

My Village/Planet/School Card is a really great way to contribute to TCF – every time you shop at a partner store they donate money to us if we are listed on your card as a beneficiary. WESTPACK are now one of their partners! We will fill in the form for you if you don't have a card. Email or phone us and THANK YOU Debbie 011 440 6322 tcfsa@mweb.co.za

*"We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life
by what we give."*

Winston Churchill

The Compassionate Friends Johannesburg Chapter Support Groups, Meetings and Events, for Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents April 2016

Saturday, 2 April at 10:00 – 12.00	Coffee and Sharing Meeting at 11 Andre Street, President Ridge, Randburg (above The Brightwater Commons)	Facilitator: Gladys Gagliardi 011-787-7876 or 084-500-5440
Saturday, 9 April at 14:00 for 14:30	Monthly Meeting at TCF Centre, 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	Support Groups: Please join us.
Saturday, 9 April at 14:00	Lenasia Support Group, Recreational Centre, Sylvia Street, Lenasia Extension 3	Counsellor: Roseline Ananmalay 084-556-4616
Every Friday 10.30 - 12.30	At TCF Centre, 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	Host – Ntuthu Radebe 076 975 5840

Current Counsellors

Isabel Ferreira: 082-335-8593

Maureen Conway: 011-802-2805 or 082-452-4490 (Siblings)

Jabu Mpungose: 082-548-9604

Ntuthu Radebe 082-741-5761

Debbie James 062 423 4164

Roseline Ananmalay: 084-556-4616

Coralie Deas 083-524-7016

Friends of The Compassionate Friends, Johannesburg	We are compiling a list of all our longstanding members who we hope will help us with Fund Raising, Events and Functions	If you would like to participate, please let Debbie James, Chapter Leader know on 011-440-6322 or info.tcfsa@mweb.co.za
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INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

We are a Charity Organization and our aim is to help bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents cope with their loss. Our services are free of charge for the first year. (Starting from the first time you made contact with us at TCF). Thereafter if you would like to continue participating in our activities, we ask for a fee (Subscription) of R250 per annum

You can also sponsor a page in our Newsletter at R100 per page or R50 per half page.

A LOVE GIFT can be any amount of money you would like to donate in memory of your child.

We are looking forward to your participation in putting together our Newsletters by writing your own story. Send your story to TCF at the beginning of the month and we will do our best to publish it. We would like to support you in your grief journey. Writing brings healing.

Contact the office to set up an appointment with any of our Counsellors for one-to-one sessions.

If you know of any organization (schools, hospitals, work places) that would benefit from our services at TCF, please inform them about our work. Often people do not know what to say or do or how they can help someone who has lost a child or a sibling. Our contact details are in the Newsletter.

**BANKING DETAILS: The Compassionate Friends, First National Bank –
Balfour Park,**

**NB: Please remember to put your name (and what you are paying for) as
a reference when you deposit money into TCF's account**

Book Reviews: Books are available from TCF as part of our Fund Raising Initiative.

A String of Pearls by Rosemary Dirmeik

After the death of her son Lionel in 1991, Rosemary Dirmeik turned to The Compassionate Friends for grief Counselling. Under their guidance she was enabled to cope with her loss and eventually became a counsellor herself. Over several years she wrote a number of articles for the TCF (Johannesburg) Newsletter and in 2002 took over the Newsletter's monthly editorial. This book is a compilation of some of those editorials. Cost R100 (excluding shipping)

Boy by Kate Shand

When 14-year-old John Peter made the tragic decision to end his life by hanging himself, he left behind a devastated family who grappled not only with coping with the overwhelming loss of a beloved son and brother, but also coming to terms with the incomprehensible choice he made that afternoon. An engaging story of unbearable sadness and grief, this searing memoir is also a journey of strength and courage. Ultimately, it is the story of a boy like any other and of a mother's survival in the aftermath of the suicide of her child. Cost R200.00 (excluding shipping)

Do you have an idea that will help TCF raise funds?

We need your help

Call us 011 440 6322

Email tcfsa@mweb.co.za

Thank you