

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Offering friendship and understanding to Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents

Johannesburg Chapter

September 2016



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Editorial

Dear Friends

Grief after a murder

Rate the following on a scale of 1-10

Birthdays

Suicide, drowning, accidental death, homicide, death by illness, infants dying, miscarriage, the loss of teenagers, that of adult children with families of their own, the death of only children, of more than one child.

Anniversaries

Of course you can't, nor should anyone ever try. Every death is a tragedy; each grief is an individual agony. Irrespective of the age of the dead child/sibling or the way they died, there is sorrow for the families. The common bottom line for all of us is the reality of our loss and all that implies for now and the rest of our lives.

The Secret Competition

National Gathering

Walk for love

Yet another fact is that many people are judgemental or offer ill-conceived advice. Perhaps you've been hurt by some of them, heard one or more of these sentences.

I Celebrate

I never thought

It was only a baby. You can always have another one.
She would have been a vegetable, you're better off this way.

Look for me..

At least my child didn't choose to die.

They Say..

Be thankful you've other children.

You must/must not do this, should/shouldn't do that.

Sibling Survivors

One of the things that most rile the bereaved is the apparent incapability of others to understand our torment. But.... how can they? They haven't experienced loss. The second before your child died, had you? Faced with such immense sadness, such unrelenting anguish, most people simply fall back on platitudes or make often thoughtless suggestions, keep a helpless silence or just creep away appalled at their inability to console.

Notices- Meetings Contacts

Knowing the hurt of intolerance and prescription, let's never be guilty of that ourselves. For who understands better than the TCF family the impossibility of putting a score on the loss of our precious children

Lifted from "A String of Pearls"

Written by Rosemary Dirmeik

Grief after a Murder

The grief of murder may be even more difficult to deal with than loss from a disease because the answer to "why" is always a third party. It is important for people to understand that gradually, in your own time, you can begin to find some solace with what has happened. In these situations, such as murder, it is vital to understand we have a legal system, not necessarily a justice system. For some, the only justice would be to have their loved one back. Acceptance is a process that we experience, not a final stage with an end point.

Here are some tips to help with the grieving process after a murder:

Those who have lost a loved one due to natural causes may not understand all the complexities of a loss from a murder.

Murder has its own deeper level of denial and shock. The event is unbelievable, unexpected, tragic and a crime, all at once.

You may feel anger longer and deeper than from other deaths. Find constructive ways to let your anger out. And give yourself lots of permission to be angry. A horrible injustice has been done to your loved one, family, friends and the world.

Look for forgiveness on your time zone, not others. Forgiveness comes from within, not from a "should forgive" place. When friends tell you the stories of how a victim's family found peace, just know they are in pain because they see you in pain.

Grief after murder has many expressions; our grief is as unique as a finger print. Some may want to get involved in the legal case, some may not. Others may want to face the murderer, others may not.

Know that not finding the murderer will often cause complex and unresolved grief. Of course it will be harder to find peace in a world where your loved one was killed and the murderer still walks free.

Murder is especially horrifying because another person's actions took an innocent life. The idea that the tragic loss of a loved one can be determined by another person's decision is devastating. It can also be incomprehensible that it can be a random act. The perpetrator may not be known to the victim or vice versa. The shock of losing someone to murder takes hold immediately and leaves family members totally bewildered.

David@grief.com

We apologise most sincerely should there be any errors or omissions. Please let us know.

BIRTHDAYS

Estelle Alridge 1.9.1998 Beloved daughter of Michelle & Richard Clarke, sister of Ryan Martin and Michelle Alridge: Brain Stem Tumour

Mark Boswell 2.9.1963 Beloved son of Colleen Boswell and brother of Tessa, Shaun and Laila: Motor Bike Accident

Marianne Roccas 2.9.1967 Beloved daughter of Dave and Jean Connon and sister of Fiona Higgo: Pneumonia

Nicaylan Naidoo 2.9.1995 Beloved son of Neil and Pam Naidoo and brother of Lievin: Suicide

Daniele Gagliardi 3.9.1981 Beloved son of Roberto and Gladys Gagliardi and brother of Michelle: Road Accident

Kieran Mayes 3.9.1966 Beloved son of Maureen Mac Gowan Mayes & Late Steve Mayes and brother of Simon, Siobhan & Chris: Motor Vehicle Accident

Megan Collett 5.9.1984 Beloved daughter of Malcolm Collett and sister of Kenneth: Suicide

Renska Koetenenbert 6.9.1976 Beloved daughter of Neels and Annet Koetenenbert and sister of Ferdi and Mariet: Cancer

Jaco Pretorius 7.9.1986 Beloved son of Louise Lubbe: Motor Vehicle Accident

Enrico Corrado Bosman 7.9.1977 Beloved son of Anita & Carrado Bosman and brother of Michele & Andrea: Upper Intestinal Haemorrhage

Arne Baumgartner 8.9.1980 Beloved son of Ingrid and Hans Ahrens: Freak Accident

Christopher Couremetis 9.9.1975 Beloved son of Judy and Costas Couremetis and brother of Michael: Homicide

Laurence Paikin 9.9.1958 Beloved son of Rose and Monty Paikin and brother of Milton and Stephanie: Heart attack

Atlarelang Tlangi Modiba 11.9.2014 Beloved Son of Johanna Modiba & Megyver Ngobeni and brother of Oratilwe Kefentse Modiba: Pneumonia

Nicole Bekker 11.9.1968 Beloved daughter of Jacqueline De Le Porte: Cancer

Lenia Fotsios 12.9.1985 Beloved daughter of Maria Fotsios and sister of Anthony and Kiki: Motor Vehicle Accident

Linley Nell 12.9.1965 Beloved son of Barbara and the Late Charles Nell: Suicide

Jean Fraser- Bothma 12.9.2008 Beloved son of Sean and Natalie Fraser-Bothma and brother of Niena and Liam: Accident

Keri Wilken 12.9.1981 Beloved daughter of Cindi Wilken: Suicide

Claudette van der Merwe 14.9.1987 Beloved daughter of Sanette and Roy Seaward: Medical Complications

Bjork Mollgaard 16.9.1982 Beloved son of Erwin and Petronella Mollgaard and brother of Sven and Annika:

Yvette Pienaar 18.9.1986 Beloved daughter of Marinda and Andre Pienaar and sister of Corne: Virus - Illness

Stephen Hemp 23.9.1970 Beloved son of Rodger and Doreen Hemp and brother of Robby and Debby: Suicide

Amariah Pillay 24.9.2014 Beloved daughter of Christina and Keshlin Pillay: Prematurity

Moyra Ncube 25.9.1983 Beloved sister of Lucia Ncube and sister of Labina and Nokuthu: Lupus

Sibusiso Jerry Mphinga 27.9.1976 Beloved son of Maria Mphinga: Road Accident

Mihla Mbube 27.9.2015 Beloved daughter of Noxolo Nkejane: Car Accident

Stuart Buchanan 29.9.1982 Beloved son of Innes and Marsha Buchanan and brother of Lee-Anne and Andrew: Illness, Typhoid

ANNIVERSARIES

Sergio Paulo Ferreira 4.9.2005 Beloved son of King and Isabel Ferreira and brother of Nuno: Homicide - Shot

Lizette Castanho 5.9.2008 Beloved daughter of Manuel and Maria Castanho and sister of David: Lupus - Inter-Cerebral Bleeding

Alyssa Botha 5.9.2012 Beloved daughter of Liesl Botha and sister of Megan: Homicide

Lynn Vieweg 6.9.1971 Beloved sister of Karen Bullen and Lee Chapman: Aneurysm

Andrew Maratos 27.9.2014 Beloved son of Sue and Nick Maratos and brother of Natalie: Cardiac Arrest

Skye Govender 8.9.2011 Beloved daughter of Selvan and Karina Govender: Stillborn

David Frack 9.9.2008 Beloved son of Martin Frack and brother of Thelma: Liver Disease

Natasha Plastourgos 9.9.2002 Beloved daughter of Helen and Dennis Plastourgos: Cardiac Arrest

Paul Dixel 10.9.1994 Beloved son of Rainer and Sue Dixel and brother of Candice: Illness

Lesego Resha 11.9.2015 Beloved daughter of Thandi Resha & Nkulumo Mdluli: Motor Vehicle Accident

Daniele Gagliardi 12.9.1999 Beloved son of Roberto and Gladys Gagliardi and brother of Michelle: Road Accident

Angus Ananmalay 13.9.1997 Beloved son of Roseline Ananmalay and brother of Marilyn, Marlon and Anne: Motor Vehicle Accident

Nicholas McCourt 14.9.2005 Beloved son of Robert and Rosemary McCourt: Suicide

Yadin Moodley 14.9.2009 Beloved son of Manju Moodley and brother of Elahn: Homicide

Tamesha Moodley 14.9.2009 Beloved daughter of Manju Moodley and sister of Elahn: Homicide

Marianne Roccas 14.9.2014 Beloved daughter of Dave and Jean and sister of Fiona Higgo: Pneumonia

Gareth Craig 16.9.2012 Beloved son of John and Debbie Craig and brother of Taryn: Motor Vehicle

Linley Nell 17.9.1995 Beloved son of Barbara and the Late Charles Nell : Suicide

Chas Smit 18.9.2005 Beloved son of Caro and Mike Smit and brother of Guy and Philli: Killed by Drunk Driver

Christopher Bates 18.9.1976 Beloved son of Kathy Cooles: Motor Bike Accident

Justin Backos 19.9.1992 Beloved son of Keith and Lynne Backos and brother of Talia: Motor Vehicle Accident

Rodney Geldenhuys 21.9.1999 Beloved son of Edith Geldenhuys and brother of Beverley: Motor Vehicle Accident

Leanne Chetty 21.9.2011 Beloved daughter of Lydia and Pat Chetty and sister of Creanne: Brain Problems

Dudley Kotze 22.9.2001 Beloved son of Leon and Dawn Kotze and brother of Cielle: Accidental Choking

Bongani Zulu 22.9.2015 Beloved son of Irene Zulu and brother of Sibongile, Sipho and Maw : Meningitis

Peter Fairon 24.9.2014 Beloved son of Mary and Gavin Fairon and brother of Lisa, Michael (twin brother), Mark and Paul: Organ Failure

Brian Christie 24.9.1998 Beloved son of Arthur Christie and brother of Megan: Motor Vehicle Accident

David Schonknecht 24.9.2005 Beloved son of Leon and Allison Schonknecht and brother of Linda: Suicide

Nompumelelo Mbana 26.9.2010 Beloved daughter of Doreen Mbana and sister of Lebohang : Illness (HIV)

Robert Van Den Houten 27.9.2006 Beloved son of Helen and Gerry Van Den Houten and brother of Kristy, Peter, Adam and Claire: Suicide

Nicole Glass 27.9.1989 Beloved daughter of Anthony and Sharon Glass and sister of Teri and Ricci: Cardiac

Sophia Bennett 28.9.2015 Beloved daughter of Adele & Rob Bennett and sister of Nathan: Cancer

Mulalo Netshipisi 30.9.2013 Beloved son of Gladys Tshikobokobo: Illness - Stomach Pains

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

The Secret Competition in the Baby Loss Club July 28, 2016 by Rachel Lewis

I sat nervously in the hospital conference room. I expected it to be empty, or at least almost empty. I mean, how many women really suffer pregnancy loss in my area anyway? And as the minutes wore on, the seats filled, answering my unspoken question. Apparently, a lot of people lose babies. A hushed, quiet, almost reverent tone overtook the room. The moderator began her recitation of expectations for the group. I shuffled in my chair. While her words laid out what I could expect to hear, I had no idea how I could expect to feel over the next two hours. Introductions began. Instead of sharing our name, our vocation, our hobbies, or the highlights of our family — things you would normally share with a roomful of strangers — we shared the one thing we often don't speak of to people we don't know. Our dead child's name. How old or far along our baby was. The nature of our loss. The names of our family who survived the loss. As more than a dozen stories of baby death unfolded before me, the tears I so desperately wanted to hold in spilled silently from my swollen lids. I cried not so much because of my own loss — but because of theirs. This was my first foray into a real baby loss club. And without even trying to, I began silently comparing our stories. Unlike the majority of my peers in the meeting, I did not suffer a second- or third-trimester loss. My baby, whom I named Olivia, died because she had implanted in my tube, causing it to rupture. Ectopic pregnancies rarely make it to the second trimester, and mine was no exception. On the one hand, my loss was completely validated by every member of the group. On the other, I allowed the differences in our experience to invalidate my own grief. My loss happened at 7 weeks. If I feel this way at 7 weeks, I wondered, how much more for these families grieving losses at 17, 27, or 37 weeks? These parents had to bury their child. My child was suctioned up in a medical tube during surgery and discarded as medical waste. They got to hear or see a heartbeat. I never did. They held their child's hand, got their fingerprints, kissed their toes. I never saw any part of my child's body, either on a screen or in person. They had baby showers, and nurseries to tear down, and gifts to return. The only evidence my child was here was a positive pregnancy test I had saved, and the freshly forming scars on my abdomen from my emergency surgery. I struggled to make sense of my loss. No — not so much the loss itself, rather, the intense feelings of grief over my loss. Because my experience was not the "worst" loss in the history of pregnancy loss, I questioned what right I really had to be as devastated as I was. It took me several years, and many more losses, to come to accept how I grieved. I have decided that each week of gestation is not the measurement of love. From the moment I received the second line on the test, I was already head-over-heels in love with my baby. She was the miracle child I didn't think I would have the chance to carry. She already carried all my hopes and dreams. Her loss was not the loss of 7 weeks of pregnancy. It was the loss of a much-wanted, much-loved child.

I learned that we don't get to choose our losses. If I can be so vulnerable, I would admit that at times on my journey, I wished I would have had a stillbirth or late miscarriage so I could have seen my baby. I desperately wanted to connect with my child, to learn about her, to know her cute lips or her tiny fingers. I wanted some memento, anything really, to cling to. I wanted memories of kicks. I wanted more than a phantom loss of a phantom baby. I wanted the physical evidence that I had indeed lost a child and not just a pregnancy. And yet — the idea that any loss would be better or worse than the one I had was really a moot point. I did not choose my early loss any more than my friend chose her late one. The cards were dealt, the dice were thrown, and we each navigated the intricacies of our individual losses as best as we could. I learned that early losses are hard in their own right, just as late losses are hard in their own right. The silence around an early loss became stifling. It began to feel like a secret to be carried rather than a grief to be shared. That the absence of some of the more formal rites of grief such as a memorial service, a grave to visit, or the outpouring of support from your community, made grief lonelier to bear. It seemed that others around me were ready to write off our pregnancy as a simple mistake we needed to hurry to get over. I discovered that grief is valid no matter the type of loss. Since the almost 5 years since we lost Olivia, I have dealt with my fair share of grief. We tried to conceive for 4 years, resulting in 4 miscarriages between 5-8 weeks gestation. While the pregnancies went on for weeks, none resulted in a baby with a heartbeat. We also chose to foster and adopt. I know the grief of packing a car seat and diaper bag for the newborn you are to pick up from the hospital to adopt — only to be told not to come in. The baby was going to a different family. Another phantom loss. A baby loved and wanted. A baby that went unseen, unknown, yet still grieved. Later, after adopting one of our children, we found ourselves agreeing to fostering a baby boy. We had no idea he would be a part of our family for a year and a half. We would be there for his first words, his first steps. He called us mommy and daddy, and we called him son. And then the courts made the decision that courts do. And we were told to drop him off at his birth mom's house at 4 pm one day. For a year and a half, he was our family. And since that good-bye, we've never seen him again. If you were to ask me today which experience has been hardest, I wouldn't be able to say with certainty. The nuances of each loss were counter-balanced by the blessings in disguise. When our son left, I had memories to keep me going. Videos and photos. Mementos of his time in our lives. And yet, the length of our time together wove his life so far into our existence, that the tearing of our relationship was absolutely devastating.

Our son did not die. In that I have hope. But he did die to us. Our early miscarriages were easier to bear physically. Their existences were quiet, subdued. They entered our life planned and hoped for, but their loss came to us in the secret. A spot of blood on my panties. A nurse's resigned, "I'm sorry." And in the quiet losses, I lost myself. How do you have a baby when the babies don't stick, and no one can tell you why? How do you endure test after test, and disappointment after disappointment, without any promise that life would give you a child in the end? When we were pregnant with Olivia, I was yet unscathed by pregnancy loss. I was able to embrace the few weeks we had with her with an unadulterated joy and love I've never experienced before or since. And yet, the physical and emotional trauma of my tube rupturing left permanent scars on my heart and body. The initial plummet into deep grief shocked me as I tried to navigate my way to a new normal. In the baby loss club, it can be so easy to subconsciously match up our experiences against others, and compare who has earned the right to grieve harder. We think about gestational age, how badly a baby was wanted, how easy or hard the baby was to conceive, how the baby died, and if and how they were birthed. We think about future and past fertility. We think about if the couple has living children or if this was their only child. The fact is: There are a million ways we could calculate the intricacies of grief. And while it can be helpful to process through the nuances of our own losses, it is never helpful to compare our nuances to someone else's. **When we invalidate someone else's pain, it does not validate our own. And when we invalidate our own pain, it does not validate someone else's pain.** If you have suffered the loss — any loss — then you have the right to grieve. Period. As for the baby loss club I joined ... While I had been working to invalidate my loss — they worked just as hard at validating it for me. This group of women became some of my most cherished friends, biggest cheerleaders, and grief supporters I have ever known. The love we share for each other and our babies, both living and dead, knocked down whatever barrier the secret competition tried to create between us. And it was in the safety of each other's heartbreak that we were each finally free to grieve.

My School/Village/Planet Cards – We now have 89 members who have these cards with TCF registered as a beneficiary as of May 2016 these members had swiped them 480 times and had raised R984.36 in passive income for usTHANK YOU. Please apply for your card today.

National Gathering 7th 8th 9th October **Alta Du Toit Skool** Kuils River Hosted by CT TCF

With love and compassion we invite you to join us for a weekend of sharing, support, understanding and love in working through our grief. Our theme is HOPE. By allowing ourselves to grieve we allow others to grieve and understand the grieving process. Grieving gets us through this very natural process in our individual ways. With this weekend spending time with other grievers we create HOPE and understanding that, by allowing our grief, we can heal.

We have compiled a weekend of sharing with one another in our hurt and opening up in a safe environment to express our individuality in creating our own HOPE. There will be time to listen to each other, be creative together, and listen to various speakers and some light entertainment. Then for me, the most important is that we will have an opportunity to honour our children on Sunday. We will light candles and do a balloon release (I know that some green and environmentalists might object, but there is nothing as healing as seeing your message to your child rising to the heavens). For the brave ones we will have an opportunity to speak about their child or share a piece of music or poetry to uplift each other. More details about our speakers will follow soon.

You are welcome to follow us on Facebook for more information

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/498249993612190/events/>

Please share this information with other bereaved or interested parties. You don't have to belong to The Compassionate Friends to attend our Gathering.

Please email Ina for Registration form @ inat@live.co.za Cape Compassionate Friends



Thank you..... Thank you to the people who pay their subs –
Thank you..... Thank you to the people who pay a monthly debit order to TCF
Thank you..... Thank you to the people who bring cakes and eats to the meetings
Thank you..... Thank you to the people who have paid donations and love gifts
Thank you..... Thank you to all our “MY SCHOOL/My Village card holders...
Thank you..... Jenny Baily who is still updating the data base of our long standing members

Walk of Love.....<http://www.rietvleilifestylecentre.co.za/web/index.asp>

Our Walk of love will be held on the 22nd of October at the Rietvlei Lifestyle Centre. It will start at 10am. You will need to register at the entrance (so please come a bit early), sign an indemnity form and pay a small entrance fee. We have hired a lapa. Please bring a packed picnic or meat to braai (there are limited facilities to braai so a portable braai is an option) and stay after the walk. If you would like to help with this event please contact the office....

Silicone Bangles - These are available from the office with “The Compassionate Friends – In Loving Memory” printed on them for R25.



DONATIONSTHANKYOU
 Robert Niven Trust
 Annita Varkevisser
 CosChem Lunch
 R Cilliers
 Mustapha Zardad



Love Gifts.....
 Given in memory of Stuart Connon and Mari-Anne Roccas with love by Dave and Jean Connon and Fiona Higgo -

*We are looking for sponsors for the program, candles and flowers for the Candle Lighting Service to be held on the 16th November. If you would like to sponsor any of the above please call the office.
 Thank You*

*Those of us who have worked through our grief and found there is a future are the ones who must meet the others in the valley of darkness and bring them to the light.
 By ~ Simon Stephens, founder, TCF*

Page lovingly sponsored by Dave and Jean Connon – “Two years now Mars since we lost you and seven and a half years Stu. You are with us still in our hearts and memories. Love you always. Mum, Dad, Fiona and all the Family”

I Celebrate

I celebrate the dust that has grown between the cracks of my shattered heart
I celebrate my brain, which has dulled the pictures of your tiny arms wrapped around my neck
I celebrate the incessant busyness of life, which has diverted my obsessive, morose long-ing for you
I celebrate my friend, who has planted tulips in your honour on this day for fifteen years
I celebrate my own strength, the depth of which I never fathomed or tapped
I celebrate my need to be a mother to my son, who was equally wounded
I celebrate the love of my husband, who was drowning in tears next to me
I celebrate the three short years that you graced and enriched our lives
But most of all I celebrate you— overflowing with love, tenderness, and generosity
Patricia Oppenheim, Lovingly reprinted from TCF Minneapolis newsletter

I never thought I could go on living when you died, but - I did.
I never thought I would survive after burying you, but - I did.
I never thought I'd get through those first days, weeks and months, but - I did.
I never thought I would be able to endure the first anniversary of your death, but - I did.
I never thought I would let myself love my new grandchild, but - I did.
I never thought tomorrow would be different, but - it was.
I never thought I would stop crying for you, but - I have.
I never thought that I would ever sing again, but - I have.
I never thought the pain would "soften," but - it has.
I never thought I would care if the sun shone again, but - I do.
I never thought I would be able to entertain again, but - I have.
I never thought I would be able to control my grief, but - I can.
I never thought I could function without medication again, but - I can.
I never thought I'd smile again, but - I do.
I never thought I would laugh out loud again, but - I do.
I never thought I would look forward to tomorrow, but - I do.
I never thought I'd reconcile your death, but - I have.
I never thought I would be able to create that "new normal," but - I have.
I never thought I'd want to go on living after you died, but - I do.
Always missing you,
always loving you,
and thinking of you daily,
with a smile on my face
and tears in my heart.
~ Author unknown

Look for me in The Rainbows

Time for me to go now, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky.
In the morning sunrise when all the world is new,
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved
you.
Time for me to leave you, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, high up in the sky.
In the evening sunset, when all the world is
through,
Just look for me and love me, and I'll be close to
you.
It won't be forever, the day will come and then
My loving arms will hold you, when we meet
again.
Time for us to part now, we won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, shining in the sky.
Every waking moment, and all your whole life
through
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved
you.
Just wish me to be near you,
And I'll be there with you.

In Memory of Lenia Fotsios

They say there is a reason,
They say that time will heal,
But neither time nor reason,
Will change the way I feel,
For no-one knows the heartache,
That lies behind our smiles,
No-one knows how many times,
We have broken down and cried,
We want to tell you something
So there won't be any doubt,
You're so wonderful to think of,
But so hard to be without.
Author unknown



Sibling survivors are often called the forgotten mourners. When a sibling dies, those siblings left behind, no matter their ages, are considered secondary mourners to the parents and/or if the sibling who died had a spouse and children. For those siblings still living at home, they will “lose” their parents for some time as the parents grieve the death of the deceased child. Parents can become so engrossed in their grief that they forget their living children still need reassurance they are loved and wanted. Because of the suicide, the surviving siblings' roles in the family are altered. They might feel the need to parent their parents or protect them from anything else bad happening. The opposite could also happen where the parents try to shield the living children, afraid of losing them, too. People forget the importance of siblings in our lives. Listed below are some characteristics of the sibling bond:

- It's the longest relationship we'll have in our lives. We are typically only a few years apart when one is born and we become aware of each other. We usually know them longer than our parents, spouses, and children.
- We witness more life events and life changes with our siblings than anyone else.
- We share a sense of genetics, sense of family, belonging, and culture.
- They teach us how to function in society and communicate with others.
- The time spent together in our early years is greater than with our parents.
-

It's estimated that 80 percent of children in the United States and Europe grow up with siblings. By approximating 1.85 children in each U.S. Household (using U.S. Census statistics) and 31,000 suicides (per year), then 24,800 people become sibling survivors of suicide yearly. That means, in the past 25 years, at least 620,000 Americans became sibling survivors of suicide. Through the life span, losing our sibling to suicide sets up complicated grief. As suicide grief is already difficult, adding in the factors relating to sibling loss reminds us of the uniqueness of the sibling bond. **Childhood:** Much of children's reactions to a sibling suicide will relate to their view of death. Some people believe children don't grieve. That's not true as children have shorter attention spans so their grief will also appear in brief periods. The grief might also manifest itself as physical pain (stomach aches, headaches, etc.) because children have underdeveloped coping skills and might not know how to express their feelings. **Adolescence:** At this time, the siblings are trying to find their role in society. Each day they look in the mirror, they aren't sure who they see because they are changing so rapidly. They believe they are immortal because they don't face much death at this age. Also, adolescents are trying to separate themselves from their families but the suicide death will throw a loop in that. They will struggle with pulling away and still wanting to be hugged by their parents. At school, they might deny their grief feelings because it's easier to fit in that way. **Young Adulthood:** During our early twenties to mid-forties, we continue to set our identities and carve out our lives and careers. We have lots of hope and if we lose our sibling at this time, we learn the hard way that life does not hold unlimited promises. We also experience anger that our sibling is not there for important life events like graduations, marriages, and the births of our children. **Middle Adulthood:** In our mid-forties to fifties, our sacrifices become rewards as we slow down to enjoy what we have worked hard for. If our sibling dies by suicide, we might start questioning our definition of happiness and wondering if we completed what we really wanted out of life. At this time, our parents might die. If we also lose our sibling to suicide and there were unresolved issues (like disagreeing on the care of a now deceased parent, etc.), we will have to find a way to work through them alone. **Late Adulthood:** After we reach our sixties, our sibling might be the only family member alive we can share memories of early life. If we lose our sibling to suicide, it will either enhance the feeling that our time to die is coming or we might not grieve because we believe we are going to die soon, too.

Typically, siblings will carry this loss through a large portion of life. We will want a way to memorialize our sibling. No one ever gets over a death, it becomes a part of us and we take it with us throughout life. Some ways we can remember our siblings include involvement in the Life keeper Faces of Suicide quilts, writing about our loved one, or getting involved with suicide prevention. There are many possibilities and each of us will come up with what we want to do when we are ready. <http://www.siblingsurvivors.com/sibling-grief/>

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

Saturday, 3 rd September 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 10 th September at 14:30	Monthly Meeting at TCF Centre, 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	Speaker : Rachel Zaidman
Saturday 10 th September at 14:00	Lenasia Coffee and Sharing Meeting please contact Roseline for address.	Facilitator: Roseline Ananmalay 084-556-4616
Saturday 24 th September 14h00 – 16h00	Suicide Support Group at 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	Facilitators: Kate Shand; Marcel Hatzis-Hugli 082 884 4085/082 724 5670
Every Friday 10.30 - 12.30	Coffee At TCF Centre, 122 Athol Street, Highlands North	Facilitator: Ntuthu Radebe 076 975 5840

Support :

Isabel Ferreira: 082-335-8593

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

Jabu Mpungose: 063 077 2331

Ntuthu Radebe 082-741-5761

Marcel Hugli 082 724 5670 (Mr)

Debbie James 062 423 4164

Roseline Ananmalay: 084-556-4616

Coralie Deas 083-524-7016

Kate Shand 082 884 4085

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,
 Branch Code: 212217; Account No: 50360007395**

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