



The Compassionate Friends
MA/CT Border Towns Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

P. O. Box 187, Pascoag, R.I. 02859

NEWSLETTER

The Compassionate Friends are here for you. Our mission is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

Our chapter meets the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 22 Dudley Hill Road, Dudley, MA

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Our Next Sharing Sessions

- Thursday July 10, 2025

Thursday August 14, 2025

Thursday September 11, 2025

***Our July meeting will be held outdoors, please see note on Page 2.**

You are always welcome to join us, even if it's been awhile since you've been to a meeting.

If you are newly bereaved, feel free to bring a supportive friend or relative. Share your feelings or say nothing and just listen; but please come.

"You need not walk alone"

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Having a bad day? Sometimes it helps to talk with someone who understands your pain. Please don't hesitate to call one of us.

"You Need Not Walk Alone!"

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LOVE GIFTS

What is a "love gift"? A love gift is a very thoughtful way of remembering your child at special times such as birthday, anniversary, or at any time, with a donation to your local chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

With your donations, we are able to reach out to other bereaved families, purchase pamphlets, and cover printing and postage costs .

Your tax deductible donations may be brought in to a meeting or sent to:

The Compassionate Friends

P.O. Box 187, Pascoag, R.I. 02859



Martha Clark in loving memory of her son
Zach Jeneral

**Thank you also to those who leave
donations anonymously in our basket at
meetings.**

IMPORTANT

As is our tradition, our **July meeting** will be held outside. This will be an informal gathering. Please bring a folding chair or a blanket you can spread on the lawn for seating. Also, if you're able, please bring a snack or drink to share with the group. In the event of bad weather, we will, of course, move indoors.

People often ask me when the "missing them" will end. I feel like the bearer of bad news when I say "NEVER". That's the part that is meant to stay forever. The pain, the tears and the blackest part of grief, yes, that can go (or at least lessen). But that ache in your heart, that will journey with you forever.

Zoe Clark-Coates

About Being Strong

Many people are convinced that being strong and brave means trying to think and talk about "something else".

But, we know that being strong and brave means thinking and talking about your dead loved one, until your grief begins to be bearable. That is strength. That is courage. And only thus can "being strong and brave help you to heal.

Sascha

"The Sorrow and the Light"

*"Everyone hears what you say.
Friends listen to what you say.
Best friends listen to what you
don't say*



Fourth of July

Each year on the 4th of July, we celebrate the birth of a great nation... a nation of people “united” in a dream. It was through hope, determination, and bonded strength that the people of America strived to achieve their dream of freedom to be a free nation.

Nothing, however, is achieved without a strong will. We, too, as bereaved parents are fighting a battle to be free – free of the pain that has become a part of our waking days. We want to be happy. We want to be able to enjoy life again. You are one of those proud Americans. Refuse to give up. Fight for your dreams. There is peace to be found in freedom!

-lovingly lifted from
TCF Wichita, KS Newsletter
Written by a member TCF, Homdel, N.J
<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/patriotic.html>

Blowing Kisses to Heaven

Grief doesn't just show up the day they die
Grief shows up on a random Monday night
Grief shows up in aisle five at the grocery store
Grief shows up when they're favorite song comes on the radio
Grief shows up at the dining room table
Grief shows up at your graduation and wedding
Grief shows up in the delivery room when they aren't by your side or in the pictures
Grief shows up on those sleepless nights
Grief shows up when the phone rings and it isn't them
Grief shows up when you go to dial their number and realize they'll never answer again
Grief shows up time and time again always unexpected and never invited
Grief doesn't just show up the day they die

Submitted by **Diane Irwin**, Ma/Ct Border Towns Chapter, TCF

Those of you who remember Diane will be saddened to hear of her recent passing.

— What is Normal After Your Child Dies? —

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile because your child is missing from all the important events in your life.

Normal is feeling like you can't sit another minute without getting up and screaming, because you just don't like to sit through anything anymore.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand what if's & why didn't I's go through your head constantly.

Normal is reliving the day your child died, continuously through your eyes and mind, holding your head to make it go away.

Normal is having the TV on the minute you walk into the house to have noise, because the silence is deafening.

Normal is telling the story of your child's death as if it were an everyday, commonplace activity, and then seeing the horror in someone's eyes at how awful it sounds. And yet realizing it has become a part of your "normal."

Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child's memory and their birthdays and survive these days.

Normal is a heartwarming and yet sinking feeling at the sight of something special your child loved.

Normal is having some people afraid to mention your child.

Normal is making sure that others remember your child.

Normal is everyone else eventually going on with their lives.

Normal is weeks, months, and years after the initial shock, the grieving gets worse, not better.

Normal is not listening to people compare anything in their life to your loss, unless they too have lost a child. Nothing compares.

Normal is realizing you do cry everyday.

Normal is being impatient with everything and everyone except someone stricken with grief over the loss of their child.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with other grieving parents.

Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned the house, did the laundry or if there is any food.

Normal is asking God why he took your child's life instead of yours.

Normal is learning to lie to everyone you meet and telling them you are fine. You lie because it makes others uncomfortable if you cry. You've learned it's easier to lie to them than to tell them the truth that you still feel empty and lost.

And last of all...

Normal is hiding all the things that have become "normal" for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are "normal."

Written by A Grieving Mother ❤️



Birthday Remembrances

***We celebrate the day they
were born and hold them in
our hearts forever.***



JULY BIRTHDAYS

David Dion - Christopher Giovanni - Jordan
Howe - Kelly Marie Ondrasek - Nicholas
Winfield

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Michael Hokanson-Dion - Sean Mathieu -
Kelly Sanders - Michael Sprouse

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Ryan Marsan - Robin Tyler - Christopher
Westgate

In Memory of our Children

***As long as we live,
our children too shall live,
for they are part of us in our
memories.***



JULY ANNIVERSARIES

Jane Baron - Casey Bulger - Christopher
Giovanni - Zachary Jeneral - Brendon Lange
– Andrew Lauder – Sean Seaver

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

None

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Joseph Doucette – Nicholas Winfield -

“When a child dies, part of a parent dies. That is a fact. From that point forward, parents live in a state of "partial life" due to having what is now called "broken heart syndrome." We are just beginning to learn all of the facts concerning grief, the effects of grief, and the reality of how grief changes the very physical and emotional make-up of parents. Those who say to parents of child loss that they should have closure and move on simply do not understand the facts of what happens to a parent physically and emotionally when a child dies. There are very real changes that take place. The pain of loss is real. Yes, parents will eventually learn how to "live within the pain of loss", but there will always and forever be a part of a parent that is missing. Parents of child loss are courageous beyond words! They are living with part of their heart and soul missing, and there is nothing ~ absolutely nothing ~ to compare to this kind of pain. God bless every parent of child loss this day with the continued courage and strength needed to go on”

Wonderfully written by Clara Hinton (2016)

THE TROUBLE WITH CONDOLENCES

Posted on November 29th, 2021

“What’s the worst thing someone ever said to you?” I’ve gotten this question so many times in the twenty-seven years since I lost my son Christopher. Newly bereaved parents often asked it in disbelief after well-meaning friends and relatives said exactly the wrong thing at the wrong time. Older grievers, like me, sometimes asked it in solidarity when we recognized our common grief.

For me, the answer to that question was: “At least you had him for seven years.”

When I heard “at least you had him,” the translation in my head was “you’re being ungrateful for the seven years you had.” What I heard in my head was you’re not entitled to be sad because he wasn’t supposed to live in the first place or, at the very least, you had seven years to prepare for this. You’re never prepared.

There were other miscues. I sometimes heard variations on this theme: “If I lost my child, it would kill me.” What I heard was, if you are still standing, your grief must not be so bad. Intrusive questions were just as hard.

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I am not alone in this. Each of us has our own horror stories. They're in a better place; you can have another baby; you're not given more than you can handle. None of these are the comfort they're intended to be. I have said all the wrong things myself to others who are grieving, words I immediately regretted flying out of my mouth.

There are reasons we say these things, even when we should know better.

What happened?

People who ask, "What happened?" are really trying to build a case for why it can't happen to them. Same with its corollary:

"Everything happens for a reason."

If there's no reason – that's an intolerable thought. What they are really saying is, I can't permit you to grieve because it means I might have to grieve someday too. They're afraid. I understand that. I'm afraid, too.

You're so strong.

When people say, "You're so strong," or some other version meant as a compliment about how well you're "handling it" or how successful you've been at "moving on," they are indirectly admitting their own fear and insecurity that they are not up to the task of

consoling you. This makes them feel powerless in a way that also makes them feel vulnerable. It's a weird rationale, but people reach for it.

It must have happened to you because you can "handle it."

I know just how you feel.

When people say "I know just how you feel. My (fill in the blank) just died," they are also saying, I don't want this horrible thing that happened to take you away from me. They want their own experience to cleave you to them. They may also be sending up a subconscious flare that the news of your loss has triggered old losses for them as well. They seek comfort from you in the moment you need comfort from them.

It's gotten easier over time to stand back and be able to consider what lies behind the words people say. I no longer get the hot flash of anger when people say the "wrong" thing to me. I try to remember to be grateful people tried, no matter what gets said, and to recognize it takes courage on their part to say something to begin with. The truth is, there is no one right thing to say. What's comforting to one person may not be to another. Not only that – what's comforting one day, may not be the next.

All these years later, I don't remember the exact words

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people used during the acute stages of my grief, but I do remember their faces and the fact they tried to comfort me when I was most in need.

It's worse to say nothing at all.



CAROL SMITH

Carol Smith is the author of *Crossing the River: Seven Stories That Saved My Life*, a Memoir about coming to terms with the loss of her son Christopher when he was seven. She lives in Seattle where she works as an editor for NPR affiliate Kuow Public Radio.

There is a saying that time heals everything.
It doesn't!

After a loss, the passing of time allows you to absorb the pain and make it a part of yourself.

But after that you can never expect to go back to being what you were before.

You'll find new ways to laugh and even to enjoy life but you will never do it the same way you did before your child's death.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We **Need Not Walk Alone**. We are The Compassionate Friends.