



The Compassionate Friends

Central Indiana Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Central Indiana Chapter Newsletter

October 2024

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a non-profit, self-help organization that provides comfort, hope, and support for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. We cordially invite you to attend our meetings.

Southside Meeting is the 1st

Wed. of each month @ 6:30 pm
New Hope Church
5307 W. Fairview Road
Greenwood, IN

Facilitator: Angie Groover
angie.groover@tcfcentralindiana.org
(317)777 4258

Upcoming Meetings:

Oct. 2nd & Nov. 6th

Northside Meeting is the 3rd

Tues. of each month @ 6:30 pm
Epworth United Methodist
6450 Allisonville Road
Indianapolis, IN

Facilitator: Peggy Johnson
peggy.johnson@tcfcentralindiana.org
(317) 850 2559

Upcoming Meetings:

Oct. 15th & Nov. 19th

CENTRAL INDIANA TCF CHAPTER

Chapter Leader: April Leo

april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org

Treasurer: April Leo

april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org

Webmaster: Larry Gardner

larry.gardner@tcfcentralindiana.org

Regional Coordinators:

Position Open

Secretary: April Leo

april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org

Special Events Coordinators:

Position Open



ANNUAL WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

Please join us on Sunday, December 8, 2024 for The Compassionate Friends 28th Annual Candle Light Ceremony.

If you have not submitted your loved one's photo for the slideshow presentation please email it to: tcfindy@sbcglobal.net

Please include the following information with photo: name, birthdate and angel date. All information needs to be submitted as soon as possible to allow an ample amount of time update the slideshow presentation.

If your loved ones photo was in the 2023 Slideshow Presentation you do not need to resubmit a photo.



New Hope Church
5307 W. Fairview Road
Greenwood, Indiana 46142

Sunday, December 8th
Time: 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Program Leaders:

April Leo, Central Indiana Chapter Leader
Angie Groover & Peggy Johnson, Support Group Facilitators
Larry Gardner, Webmaster

Fellowship Hour:

5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Make an ornament for the holidays in memory of your loved one.
Please bring your favorite finger food for the refreshment pitch-in.
Drinks provided by TCF of Central Indiana.

Candle Lighting Ceremony:

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Chapter Leader & Support Group Facilitators
Readings, Slideshow Presentation, Music & Reading of Children's names.

Photos:

Every family is welcome to bring a photo as well to place on the remembrance table.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

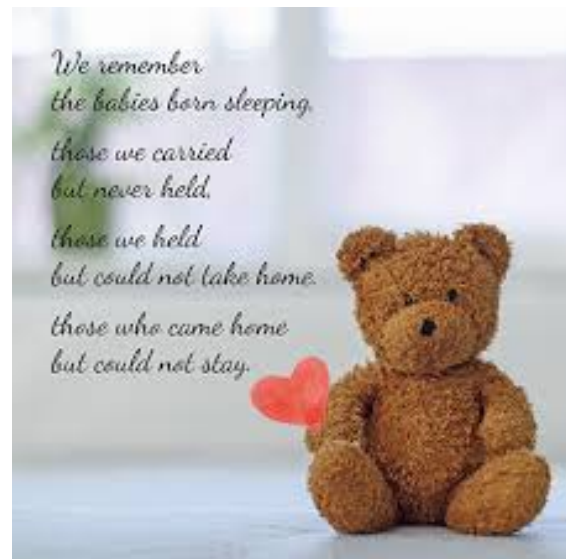
When a baby dies before or after birth, parents face a difficult emotional task: trying to say goodbye to someone they had little chance to know. They must accept that a life has ended, even though it barely began. You are likely to experience some more common symptoms of grief — you may go into shock or even deny that your baby has died. Depression, anger, frustration, and other painful emotions are to be expected. And even if you are typically a committed, caring person, you may find that you don't care about anything or anyone right now. As noted earlier, for many parents, this time is simply one of existence and survival and little more. There are two typical reactions to death that you will probably

experience very acutely after losing a baby before or shortly after birth: anger and guilt. Because a baby's death seems unnatural, there is a powerful urge to blame someone. You may be angry with your doctor, hospital, or God if you are a believer.

Pregnancy brings with it many expectations, dreams, and fantasies — you spend months planning not just the birth of your child but also their life and all the years to come. But, then, as you are emotionally preparing to welcome a child into the world, instead, you must accept the loss and all expectations for their future. Leaving grieving parents feeling overwhelmed by a tremendous sense of emptiness.

Parents of infants will have different triggers and potentially painful situations in the months following their baby's death. Your home may be filled with baby clothes, bottles, and a crib. If you registered with any new mother websites or infant sites, subscribed to any magazines, or registered for a shower, you would likely receive coupons for baby food or formula and more in the mail. A baby magazine may show up as a trial subscription. Photographers may call and offer to take baby pictures. Just walking past the infant-wear department in a store may initiate tears of mourning.

After the death and loss of a child, resolving the grief you feel for the baby you lost will be challenging. However, before accepting your baby's death, you must acknowledge their life — their existence as a person. Remember, no matter how brief your baby's life, you have just as much right to grieve as any other bereaved parent.



www.thriveworks.com

How to cope with the death of a child

Your child has died, your world may feel turned upside-down. Whether their death was anticipated or unexpected, this is out of the natural order and may feel incomprehensible. In addition to grief, you may also be experiencing trauma. Regardless of the label, this is pain unlike any you have faced before.

It's important to understand the impact that grief and trauma have on us physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially. Bringing to focus how grief and trauma impact our overall well-being can eventually help decrease the intensity of the pain by understanding it better so that it lessens the sensation that it is controlling us; rather, we coexist with it.

Those of us in grief often feel that there is something wrong with us, and may shy away from openly discussing death and grief. Instead, it's important to encourage traits like stoicism, positive thinking, self-reliance and strength. Below are some ways that grief and trauma can impact our functioning.

How grief and trauma may impact someone physically

- Hollowness or discomfort in the stomach.
- Poor appetite, weight loss.
- Over-eating for comfort, weight gain.
- Tightness in the chest, chest pain.
- Tightness in the throat.
- Increased sensitivity to noise.
- A sensation of depersonalization, like nothing seems real.
- Shortness of breath, difficulty catching your breath or feeling like you can take a deep breath and get enough air.
- Muscle weakness.
- Lack of energy.
- Dry mouth.
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Vague aches and pains.

How grief and trauma may impact someone's emotional and mental health

- Sadness. Feelings of sadness may show up in intense waves, particularly when alone or engaging in a mundane task, like taking a shower or driving.
- Anger. This tends to come from two places: First, from frustration that the parent could not prevent death. Second, the frustration may be related to feeling very anxious and helpless about the situation. Sometimes this anger may be targeted outwardly (family members, healthcare providers, God, etc.); sometimes it may be targeted inwardly.

- Guilt. Guilt may be related to the feeling that we could have or should have known or done something differently to prevent death, to relieve the child's suffering or to be a better parent.
- Anxiety. Someone might have a sense of insecurity and heightened awareness of death and their own mortality, fears and despair about the future, and worry about the health and safety of other loved ones.
- Loneliness. Someone grieving may feel deep emotional loneliness even when they are not physically alone.
- Fatigue. It may feel very difficult to be active or productive as you have little energy. Mental and emotional fatigue may also feel like not caring about anything.
- Helplessness. It may feel very difficult to navigate daily tasks when your child was your main priority.
- Shock. This is a very common reaction whether the death was sudden or unexpected, or whether it was anticipated. Even when our mind understands what happened, our emotions take time to catch up.
- Yearning. A parent may feel an overwhelming physical need for their child.
- Emancipation. There might be a sense of relief that the child is no longer suffering or that they no longer have to take care of overwhelming caregiving tasks.
- Numbness. This is a natural, protective response to overwhelming grief and trauma. A parent may feel empty, hollow or "blank."

How grief and trauma may affect someone cognitively:

- Disbelief. Someone who lost their child may feel things like: *That didn't happen, there must be some mistake, I can't believe it, I'm dreaming.*
- Confusion. It might be difficult to concentrate, think or communicate clearly, or someone may be forgetful or feel in a mental fog.
- Preoccupations. Someone may have ongoing, intrusive thoughts about their child. For example, they might think of their pain, the circumstances of their death, how they feel it could have been prevented, or how much emotional pain they are in.
- A sense of presence. Someone who lost their child may experience that they are still there, watching over them or with them in some way.

How grief and trauma may impact an individual's behavior and social functioning:

- Sleep disturbances.
- Appetite disturbances like undereating or overeating.
- Absent-minded behavior, forgetfulness or getting lost.
- Social withdrawal not only with people, but sometimes from the outside world. For example, someone may stop watching television or keep in touch with others and avoid social media, etc.
- Dreams or nightmares about their child.
- Avoiding "triggers" such as reminders of their child, or distressing places or things.
- Restlessness or hyperactivity.

- Crying.
- Visiting places or treasuring objects that belonged to their child.

Coping with grief and trauma

All these reactions are natural, expected, and believe it or not, ok. Usually, these reactions will dilute over time as we build the muscle to carry this pain and adapt to coexisting with it, hopefully with plenty of support.

Short-term and long-term coping strategies for grief and trauma

Although there is no timeframe for grief, and it is not a linear experience, it might be helpful to prioritize certain coping strategies in the short term and others in the long term to help alleviate how overwhelming this can be. There is no recipe or ideal approach to follow, but here are some ideas to help nurture yourself during this extraordinarily challenging time.

Short-term coping strategies:

- Eat regularly.
- Sleep enough, or try to rest frequently even if actual sleep is difficult or impossible; grief is exhausting on so many levels.
- Take a walk for a break, for fresh air, to move your body, and go as slowly/quickly or long/short as feels right.
- Don't neglect your own health (take medications, keep medical appointments or schedule them if they're due).
- Stick to a routine as much as possible. There can be comfort in the structure.
- Try to avoid big decisions or major life changes.
- Ask for help and allow others to help; consider delegating tasks.
- Allow emotions as they come AND allow a break from emotions.
- If spirituality or religious faith is an important part of your life, try to ground yourself with aspects of it that are comforting during this season.
- Try to relax and nurture/nourish yourself through breathing, exercise, nature, friends, comfort foods or activities/rituals that you find peaceful.
- Spend time with (comforting, safe, supportive) people; even if you're not yourself, the gentle company right now is often a good thing.

Long-term coping strategies

- Continue to plan things (eventually) for personal growth and enjoyment, even small pleasures which are soothing, interesting or uplifting.

- Compassionately permit yourself to be imperfect or to feel like a different person than you felt before. You are not a failure; you are in the worst pain you've ever experienced and you are doing the very best you can.
- Allow yourself to say "No." You only have so much energy and bandwidth, and your priorities may have shifted.
- Spend time in nature, with animals/pets or in a garden.
- Be creative or expressive, either actively or passively. Try writing, art, crafts, music, making a scrapbook/photo album by visit an art gallery, watch a favorite film or listen to music that you enjoy.
- Do something you're good at to ground yourself in your skills and strengths during this time which can feel so upside-down and powerless.
- Use your sense of humor.
- Reflect on your own unique and wonderful qualities, your strength throughout this unimaginable situation, the people who have loved and supported you, the people you've helped and touched and the life experiences that you are proud of.
- Be as gentle and compassionate with yourself as possible, particularly in your inner self talk. If it helps, you can try to talk to yourself like a kind, supportive coach or like you would talk to someone you loved who was going through this.
- Try to openly and authentically express your feelings sometimes. Talking with trusted, caring loved ones, in a grief support group. Express your feelings through writing or crying and allow what comes out to simply flow without judgment
- Remember positive, loving memories of your child. Consider sharing these memories with others when you are thinking about them — this can be in whatever way feels right to you — in-the-moment conversation, texting, emailing, checking in with a close friend or family member or using social media.
- Sometimes doing favorite hobbies, interests or rituals of your child like going to their favorite places or eating their favorite foods can be a comforting connection; being with or speaking with "their people" is soothing since memories and grief can be shared with those remembering and grieving them too (even though everyone will grieve in their own way).
- It may help to think of ways you can honor your child, in large or small ways; you can think of their values, interests or how they positively impacted those around them in considering how you can contribute to their legacy or pay tribute to them.
- Consider reaching out to professionals or a group for support; sometimes people fear that "talking to someone" has a stigma that means something is wrong with them, but reframing it to (more accurately) mean that you are bolstering yourself with more support during an extraordinarily challenging time, giving yourself more tools in your healing and thinking about it as self-growth rather than "treatment" may help.

"To honor you, I get up every day, take a breath, and start another day without you in it.

To honor you, I laugh and love with those who knew your smile, and the way your eyes twinkled with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you, I take the time to appreciate everyone I love. I know now there is no guarantee of days or hours spent in their presence.

To honor you, I listen to music you would have liked, and sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back, risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You were my light, my heart, my gift of love, from the very highest source. So every day I vow to make a difference, share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do, I do to honor you."

~ unknown author



<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
Grant Pearson	Oct 01	Dec 12
Corinne Shields	Oct 01	Aug 10
Caleb Harvey	Oct 02	May 21
Jennifer Allison Bang	Oct 03	Oct 31
Lora Pfiffner	Oct 04	Nov 21
Lisa Artrip	Oct 05	Oct 05
Crystal Olin	Oct 06	Jun 10
Renee' Hostetter	Oct 07	Mar 15
Jon Morgan	Oct 07	Mar 22
Stephen Allen Pavy	Oct 07	Jul 01
Erica Herran	Oct 10	Oct 07
Lauren Sacha Johnson	Oct 10	Jan 18
Nathaniel Carl Mroz	Oct 10	Aug 08
Gary Curtis	Oct 14	Mar 21
Jake Thomas	Oct 14	Dec 29
Kaley Michelle Pitrelli	Oct 17	Apr 23
Anabelle Swinehart	Oct 18	Oct 05
Anthony "AJ" Elliott	Oct 19	Feb 14
Brian Andrew Jackson	Oct 20	May 29
Jesse Walton	Oct 21	Jul 27
Jonathon Flasch	Oct 22	May 22
Cory Barker	Oct 22	Jan 15
Charles (Charlie) Myers	Oct 23	Oct 24
Elizabeth "Lisa" Watson	Oct 23	Dec 28
Allece Tyshea Walker	Oct 25	Jun 20
John David Woods	Oct 25	May 14
Brice Thompson	Oct 26	Jul 15
Jeff Gardner	Oct 27	Jan 16
Mason Cole Garvey	Oct 27	Jun 25
Kimberley Ross Weston	Oct 27	May 31
Dean Leavell II	Oct 28	May 21
Vince Hofmeister	Oct 30	Oct 10
Travis Karn	Oct 30	Jan 08
Jake Findly	Oct 31	Feb 03
Willie Kalin	Oct 31	Nov 11



<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthdate</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>
Dyaln McGinnis	Aug 03	Oct 01
Glenn Schoenhals	Apr 17	Oct 02
Jasbrielle Harden	Apr 05	Oct 03
Eric Edgell	Jul 31	Oct 04
Lisa Artrip	Oct 05	Oct 05
Erica Herran	Oct 10	Oct 07
Anabelle Swinehart	Oct 18	Oct 05
Harper Fowler	Jan 22	Oct 05
Brian Apman	Jun 04	Oct 05
Jacob Alan Davidson	Jul 11	Oct 07
Christy Burdsall	Sep 10	Oct 08
Vince Hofmeister	Oct 30	Oct 10
John Michael McGuire	May 18	Oct 11
Daryn Barnett	Apr 05	Oct 18
Zoe Nicole Martin	Jan 24	Oct 20
Robin ("DD") Johnson	Jun 17	Oct 21
Nate Stewart	May 15	Oct 23
Benjamin Greer	Mar 23	Oct 23
Erin Davis	May 04	Oct 24
Charles (Charlie) Myers	Oct 23	Oct 24
Ella Rhodes	Mar 23	Oct 24
Mark Christopher Palmer	Dec 30	Oct 26
Chloe' Nicole Corbin	Jun 17	Oct 28
Jacob Westman	Nov 26	Oct 28
Kashius Davis	Dec 21	Oct 30
Joseph Paul Lawrance	May 17	Oct 30
Jennifer Allison Bang	Oct 03	Oct 31



The Compassionate Friends

*Central Indiana Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies*

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 we 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 the gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for our children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that 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.

We welcome submissions for the newsletter from any of our members. If you have a poem or some other writing that has helped you, or just some helpful insights of your own, submit them to april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org. Please be sure to include the author's name, whether it's someone else or yourself.

Love gifts are much appreciated.
You can mail them to our
Treasurer, April Leo
7133 Nostalgia Lane
Indianapolis, IN 46214
(317) 681 4292
april.leo@tcfcentralindiana.org

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