



The Compassionate Friends

Central Indiana Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Central Indiana Chapter Newsletter **April 2025**

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:

April 2nd & May 7th

Northside Meeting is the 3rd

Tues. of each month @ 6:30 pm

Epworth United Methodist

6450 Allisonville Road

Indianapolis, IN

Facilitator: Melanie Stewart
melanie.stewart@tcfcentralindiana.org

Upcoming Meetings:

April 15th & May 20th

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



Melanie Stewart and Kelli Clarke are the new Northside Meeting Facilitators. Melanie will take the lead and Kelli will co-host as needed. We are extremely grateful for these two who have come forward volunteering their time to support our families.

For those of you who attend the Northside Meetings at Epworth United Methodist Church, please be advised the group will now meet in room #6. It is located in the church basement. There is a sidewalk, to the right of the main entrance and next to the playground, which leads from the parking lot to basement door. Meetings will continue to be held the 3rd Tuesday of each month and begin at 6:30 pm.

The Compassionate Friends 48th National Conference

July 11th – July 13th

Hyatt Regency
Bellevue
900 Bellevue Way NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 48th Annual National Conference in Bellevue, WA! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief, all while making friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

Unique and cherished highlights of our conference include our heartfelt Saturday evening Candle Lighting Program, Sharing Sessions, Keynote Addresses, Healing Haven, Butterfly Boutique, Crafty Corner, and Silent Auction. Our weekend of inspiration, sharing, and learning is followed by the Walk to Remember on Sunday morning.

If you would like to attend the conference, please use the "Register Now" button at the top of this page to complete your registration. Registration for your hotel room is separate. You can reserve a room as part of our hotel block with our special conference rates.

This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated [reservation link](#). Our discounted room rate with the Hyatt is \$165 per night plus applicable taxes and fees. Please note that each attendee can reserve a maximum of two rooms. Many attendees arrive on Thursday since the conference begins early on Friday morning. We also have pre-conference activities that are offered on Thursday evening, that attendees find beneficial. We look forward to seeing you in Bellevue!

More detailed information regarding workshops and event guest speakers can be found at www.compassionatefriends.org/events

Grieving the Loss of a Child

Everyone grieves in different ways, regardless of the type of loss experienced. When grieving the loss of a child, the grief process rarely follows a prescribed pattern. In fact, charts and graphs depicting stages of grief can never definitively predict or explain such a complex, highly personalized human experience.

When families with strong, healthy relationships lose a child, grief processes may be individualized, yet their relationships may survive intact (and perhaps even become stronger) as the family unit experiences the loss together. When families with weak relational ties experience the loss of a child, family relationships may become fractured.

Marital Stress

After losing a child, parents may find themselves experiencing shock, denial, anger, depression, hopelessness, guilt, isolation, disorganized thoughts, feelings of acceptance, and/or a host of other possible thoughts and feelings. Mothers and fathers may cling to each other more closely, give each other space to grieve independently, distance themselves from each other temporarily, blame each other, show disdain for the other's grieving style, etc.

Because parents sometimes temporarily choose to relate to each other in vastly different ways after the loss of a child, conflicts may arise. When the lack of understanding about each person's ways of expressing grief causes marital problems, this may signal the need to contact someone outside the family/friend system who can help. Professional family therapist with training in marital therapy are prepared to do just that.

When Therapy Might Help

Grief is a normal process of life. When people grieve, they may naturally decide to suspend daily activities for a period to express grief privately. As with the overall grief process, the needed period of privacy varies greatly from individual to individual.

Because many ways of expressing grief are, in fact, personalized responses to great loss, when should a therapist be consulted? In general, consider contacting a marriage and family therapist if a grieving person:

- discusses harming themselves or another person
- isolates themselves (emotionally or physically) from dependent children
- refuses to eat, bathe, get out of bed, go to work, etc.
- refuses to believe that the loss occurred
- begins to engage in dangerous or unusual rituals
- erupts (uncharacteristically) in fits of rage
- suddenly threatens divorce
- insists repeatedly that no one is listening or willing to understand his/her feelings
- refuses to talk about anything else

Types of Therapy

A professional marital and family therapist may choose to utilize any of the following formats for therapy:

Individual Therapy – the therapist meets one-on-one with a client to assist the client in achieving the client's personal goals

Family Therapy – the therapist meets with multiple members of the family unit to help family members find healthy ways to address the loss of their loved one and nurture strong family relationships

Group Therapy – the therapist meets with a group of individuals from different families who have experienced the loss of a child so that group members might learn from and, possibly, relate to each other in a professional setting

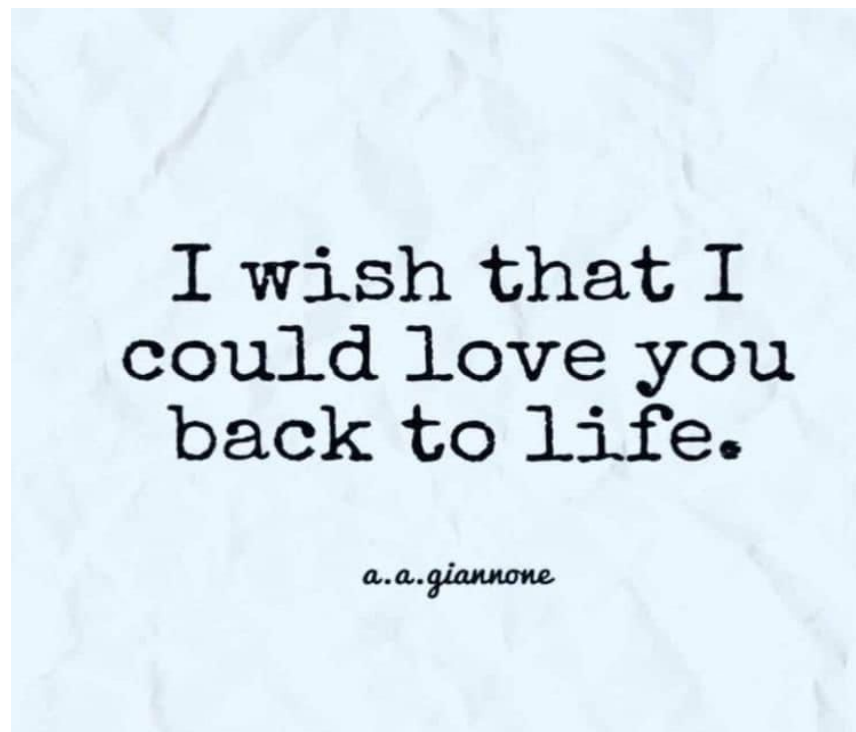
Additional Helpful Strategies

Keep a journal. Sometimes it is useful to write down thoughts and feelings that may be difficult to express verbally.

Find a friend who allows you to talk about your loss. Some friends may believe that talking about the loss is unhealthy. However, if you feel an occasional need to talk about your loss, look for a friend who will listen kindly and without judging.

Establish a new family ritual in which the lost child is honored in some way. For example, some families declare the birthday of the child "Family Day". Every year, the parents take off work, check the children out of school, and plan an enjoyable family activity. Over the years, a ritual of this kind often helps family members heal as they openly talk about and remember the loss.

Join a support group. Whether located online or at a local church, groups of people with similar life experiences can offer encouragement to those who desire ongoing contact with others of like mind.



Trapped In A World Between Living And Dead

by Maria Kubitz



Sometimes I feel like I'm stuck somewhere between living and dead.

To be more specific, when my 4-year-old daughter died, a part of me died with her. For over a decade I've dealt with the pain of my grief. During that time, I've continually been learning how to reinvest in living a meaningful life. Yet the part of me that died is tethered to the realm of the dead. A realm that contains my daughter, the world she was a part of, and the hopes and dreams I once had for her.

The realm of the dead is a sorrowful place.

No matter how much energy I invest in cultivating love, contentment, and enjoyment in my current life, I often find myself gazing back at the realm of the dead with a broken heart. A broken soul. It is a place filled with bittersweet memories, shattered dreams, and endless longing for a life that was, but can never be again. But it is also the place where my daughter is.

If I'm being honest, I don't really want my tether to the realm of the dead to ever break. Our daughter, Margareta, was only four when she died. Not many people other than our extended family and circle of friends knew her. And many of those who knew her don't think of or speak about her much anymore. It doesn't mean they don't still love or miss her. But that's often what happens when people die. We move on with our day-to-day lives and remember them fondly (and sadly) from time-to-time. Especially on birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions.

Everyone eventually moves on — *except* bereaved parents.

No matter how much I try to adjust to a world without my child, the tether continues to pull on me. And after talking with many bereaved parents over the past decade, most of them feel the same. As a result, bereaved parents continually feel the dead part of us that lies deep within. Even years and decades after our children died.

It may sound hopeless and painful, and in the early years after the death of a child, it very much is. But that continual pull is what keeps our children present in our thoughts...and in our current lives. For me, it represents that Margareta may no longer be a part of this world, but she is still an important part of **my** world. Even if it is only in my thoughts; in the thoughts of her dad, brothers, and others who love her.

Though the finer details of her life are slowly fading, she is still very much loved and thought of every day. And the same is true for every child who was lost before their parent(s) no matter their age.

So maybe being trapped between living and dead is not as bad as it sounds. It isn't for me.

Sometimes in life there are losses. Losses that can never really be replaced. Losing you has been the hardest thing I've ever had to live with. I wasn't ready to say goodbye.

I wasn't ready to let you leave. I would give anything for just one more day, just one more second. But I've learned to trust in unconditional love. Because the one profound thing about death is that love never dies. Some bonds cannot be broken. Because even though you're not physically here, your heart is - it lives on within me. I carry your heart inside mine. I carry it on days when I discover something new. I carry it on days when beauty unfolds in the most unexpected places. I carry it on days when I find courage to heal and to grow. I carry it with me — always. Someday we will meet again - and we will no longer be separated by time or space. But until that day, I'll find comfort in knowing that you are still with me. Your heart safely tucked inside mine. Some hearts just belong together

and

nothing will ever change that. I loved you then.

I love you now. Always did. Always will. Forever in my mind. Forever in my heart. I will carry you. 💖💐



Loved One's Name

Birthdate

Angel Date

Daryn Barnett	Apr 05	Oct 18
Jasbrielle Harden	Apr 05	Oct 03
Kaitlyn Isbell	Apr 05	Nov 14
Daniel Hill	Apr 08	Aug 10
Joshua Wright	Apr 08	Nov 15
Jeffery D Hopper	Apr 09	Mar 11
Connor Emery	Apr 09	Jun 04
Trevon McGee	Apr 12	
Kevin Jay Elkins	Apr 13	Jun 01
Katie Garrity	Apr 13	Jan 28
Eric Ward	Apr 13	Jun 22
Morgan Gaither	Apr 17	May 18
Michael Rusomaroff	Apr 17	Jan 06
Glenn Schoenhals	Apr 17	Oct 02
Adam Wisley	Apr 17	Aug 12
Chloe Melisa O'Gwynn	Apr 19	May 16
Kenneth Davis III	Apr 20	Sep 03
Mariah Dawn Sophia Benefiel	Apr 21	Apr 11
Ryan Huter	Apr 21	May 17
Drew Nichols	Apr 22	Sep 06
Ted Schlechte	Apr 24	Sep 19
Blake Jamison	Apr 27	May 31
Ellie Kaschner	Apr 28	Aug 17
Derek Hickman	Apr 30	Sep 21



Child's Name

Birthdate

Angel Date

Maxwell Jacobson	Jun 16	Apr 02
Jonathon Kalin	Mar 31	Apr 03
Rebecca Ann Freed	Mar 08	Apr 05
Harrison Conner Strader Wood	Nov 08	Apr 05
Erich Ennen	Mar 27	Apr 07
Mariah Dawn Sophia Benefiel	Apr 21	Apr 11
Shauna Lydy	Jun 21	Apr 14
Matt Price	Nov 06	Apr 15
Alex Cummings	Jul 14	Apr 15
Dustin Mullins	Jul 16	Apr 19
Matthew Luedeman	Jun 20	Apr 21
Kaley Michelle Pitrelli	Oct 17	Apr 23
Troy McElfresh	Mar 17	Apr 25
Gabriel Spiegel	May 14	Apr 25
Kyle Jackson	Feb 23	Apr 27
MacKenzie Barnes	Jan 09	Apr 28
Maurice Martinez	Nov 24	Apr 29
Jeremiah Goldsby	Jul 31	Apr 30
Cameron Alexander Sherrill	Jan 23	Apr 30

Central Indiana Chapter



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
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