



# *The Compassionate Friends*

*Central Indiana Chapter*  
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

**September 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 1<sup>st</sup>

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:**

Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> & Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>

**Northside Meeting** is the 3<sup>rd</sup>

Tues. of each month @ 6:30 pm

Epworth United Methodist

6450 Allisonville Road

Indianapolis, IN

**Facilitator:** Melanie Stewart  
melanie.stewart@tcfcentralindiana.org

**Upcoming Meetings:**

Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> & Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>

**CENTRAL INDIANA TCF CHAPTER**

**Chapter Leader:** April Leo

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Katy Meyers

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**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 mothers 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 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 the basement door. Meetings will continue to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month and begin at 6:30 pm.**

# Coping With Grief When Your Child Dies

## Grief reactions: Yearning

The early grieving period often is accompanied by a sense of yearning for the child who died. You may feel an overwhelming desire to hold your child in your arms again, to be reunited with him or her. Your inability to fulfill this desire may make you irritable, restless, frustrated and depressed. You may struggle to keep a clear picture in your mind of your child's appearance, smell, voice and mannerisms. You may find it comforting to keep special remembrances of your child, such as a picture, a name bracelet, a blanket, a lock of hair, a special toy or cards from family and friends. Some parents attempt to fill the emptiness they feel by having another child. This decision is best postponed during the immediate period after a child's death to allow parents to mourn their loss. After some time, you can welcome a new baby for himself or herself rather than as a replacement for the child who has died.

## Grief reactions: Loneliness

You may feel an overwhelming sense of loneliness. Even when you are surrounded by loving and caring family and friends, you may still feel isolated in your grief. Your loneliness may be accompanied by a physical aching sensation. Your heart may literally hurt and feel as if it is breaking. Your arms and legs may feel heavy, and you may lack the strength to stand. You may feel as though you are functioning on a different emotional level than others around you. You may find it difficult to express your grief with words. Many parents describe feeling as if they have lost control of themselves and their emotions. Sometimes they fear they are losing their minds or sinking into a "deep hole."

## Grief reactions: Anger

You may also feel strong feelings of anger. You may also feel strong feelings of anger. You may feel angry toward your spouse, other family members or your child's physicians and nurses. You may even be angry with your child for leaving you. Seeing other families with children may be painful. You may feel envious of their happiness and togetherness and upset by what feels like their insensitivity to your situation. You may become angry when other parents appear to lack appreciation for treasured moments with their children. Hearing about abandoned or abused children may be especially difficult. All these feelings are normal. You may also direct anger toward yourself in the form of self-blame or feelings of failure. You may wonder if somehow you caused your child's death. These feelings may challenge your perception of yourself as a loving, competent and protective parent. You may question your ability to care for surviving or subsequent children. You may feel like less than a whole person. While these are natural feelings following a child's death, it is important to remember your strengths as a parent and everything you did to help your child. Positive memories of your relationship with your child can bring comfort and renewed self-esteem.

### Grief reactions: Sleep

You may find that you are unable to sleep or that you sleep all the time. When you do sleep, you may dream of your child. Initially, your dreams may be unsettling. Over time, however, you may find that your dreams reflect more positive experiences and become more of a source of healing.

### Grief reactions: Physical Ailments

Physical ailments may be aggravated by the inner tension you are feeling. Physical reactions may include difficulty eating or overeating, gastrointestinal disturbances, exhaustion, heart palpitations, nervousness or shortness of breath. Also, bereaved parents commonly experience an inability to focus. If these reactions interfere with your daily responsibilities or are persistent, it is important to seek help from your doctor or counselor. The "new normal" One of the challenges of being a grieving parent is developing a "new normal." Your life will never be the same and you may find yourself categorizing memories into "before and after," marking time from the loss. Your child will always be a part of your life, but these changes are part of your new existence. You may find it helpful to talk to other bereaved parents who have found new ways to integrate the memories of their children into their lives. You may experience moments when a passing memory or a special date will trigger intense feelings of grief, but over time, you will be able to cope better with these experiences.

### Relationships with Family & Friends:

The death of a child affects immediate and extended family members, as well as parents. The ways people express their grief may vary greatly. Spouses may experience the loss differently and work through their grief in different ways. Other children may not fully understand the way a family changes after a death. It may be difficult for you to respond to the grief of others when you are struggling with your own. Family members sometimes find it hard to support and comfort each other. Immediately after the death of your child, family and friends typically gather to offer comfort and support. You may find that there are special people you wish to have near you and with whom you can share some of your feelings. You may want some time alone. It is important to let people know what your specific needs may be. As time goes on, you may find that family and friends are less available. Relatives and friends may be returning to their daily routines when you still need people who will listen and care. The support you felt at the time of your child's death may seem to disappear. You may sense that people are uncomfortable hearing about your grief and loss. Some people may suggest that you put your grief aside and return to routine activities. You may feel as though you must hide your grief, but you need someone who will listen when you want to talk. You may feel most comfortable talking to a family member or a close friend, or perhaps to a counselor or a therapist. Many parents find it helpful to talk with other parents who have lost a child.

### Parents' Grief:

The death of your child is unlike any other loss you are likely to experience. Your child's innocence and vulnerability and your perceived inability to protect him or her from death may leave you feeling powerless and helpless. The loss of your child is the loss of a part of you. The grief a parent experiences lasts a lifetime, but the intensity of your feelings will vary over time and eventually happy memories of your child may be a source of comfort to you.

### Initial Shock:

When your child has died, you are likely to experience shock. You may have trouble believing that your child's life has ended and cling to the hope that somehow your child remains alive. Life may seem unreal, and you may feel an overwhelming numbness or an inability to respond to people and events around you. Conversations may seem distant and hard to recall, as if you are in a "fog." You may be unable to hear details or ask questions regarding your child's death. Because decisions are difficult during periods of profound grief, consider asking relatives or friends to assist you with the burial and funeral arrangements. Family and friends can be tremendously supportive during this time. Their willingness to listen when you need to talk openly and express your grief can be comforting.

### Response of Family & Friends:

Family and friends are sometimes unsure about what to say or how to help. You may find that some people avoid you or seem uncomfortable around you, which can make you feel like an "outsider." Some people may be at a loss for words, while others may say things that sound hurtful to you. You might even feel angry with them. How you respond will depend on the circumstances and your level of emotional energy at the time. You may choose to ignore comments or actions that seem hurtful; you also may say, "That is not helpful to me."

### Delayed Impact:

You probably will not experience the full impact of your loss for weeks, months or even a year later. Over time, as the emotional and physical pain of your grief enters your awareness, some of the numbness you felt initially will diminish. That is why the one-year anniversary of your child's death is likely to be a painful milestone. Many parents are filled with intense feelings of sorrow, despair, anger, fear and emptiness. They may replay and question the circumstances of their child's death over and over, experiencing feelings of guilt and frustration. These reactions are normal.

### Grief is Personal:

The intensity of sorrow and grief that people experience is broad and unique. Each person, even within the same family, grieves in his or her own way, depending on past experiences, cultural patterns, relationship with the child who died, circumstances surrounding the death and current life stressors. There is no right way to grieve other than what feels right to you. Sometimes grief must be placed on the "back burner" when there are logistical concerns. You

can always revisit your grief, but you cannot avoid experiencing it. Grief is a natural part of the healing process and will help you cope with your loss. Find comfort in knowing that this period of intense grieving will end. The pain will diminish, and you will find ways to live with your grief and loss. Many parents reflect that this will not happen overnight and that you may frequently feel as though you are moving backward in your grief. However, the intensity of your grief will eventually decrease.

#### Thoughts to Remember:

Regardless of our age, we all grieve when someone we love dies. Most, if not all, parents say that the death of a child is one of the most devastating experiences of their lives. Grieving is painful but necessary. It is a very personal process, and each person grieves in his or her own way. In time, however, most parents find that their pain lessens, and they learn to have a "different kind of relationship" with the child who died. Their sadness changes from a bitter sadness to a sweet one. They remember their child with deep love and appreciate the gift of his or her life.





<b><u>Loved One's Name</u></b>	<b><u>Birthdate</u></b>	<b><u>Angel Date</u></b>
Summer Barndt	Sep 05	Jan 02
Suzanne Binder	Sep 05	Jun 19
Jonathan Titchenal	Sep 05	Jun 27
Makenlee Anne Bibb	Sep 06	Sep 06
Molly Jayne Day	Sep 06	Dec 28
Brian Kercheval	Sep 08	Sep 03
Sonrisa Moring	Sep 08	Jan 31
Jamie Smiley	Sep 08	Jan 26
Abigail Rejer	Sep 09	Mar 30
Tim "TJ" Rich, Jr	Sep 09	Jul 02
Christy Burdsall	Sep 10	Oct 08
Kyle Kania	Sep 10	Nov 01
Christopher Marcum	Sep 10	Mar 02
Rachel Litherlaud	Sep 11	Jan 02
Mark Andrew Nadelin	Sep 11	Dec 24
Gary Robert Denien	Sep 12	May 02
Kortney Reid	Sep 16	Sep 16
Nikahlas D. Fischer	Sep 19	Feb 24
Dodi Mills	Sep 19	Jul 14
Lori Diane Sherrill	Sep 19	Jan 27
Peyton Belling	Sep 20	Feb 25
Tristan M Hughes	Sep 21	Mar 26
Harold Lynn Shelton	Sep 21	Jun 02
Ahmari Smith	Sep 21	Jul 10
Christopher Hunter	Sep 22	Oct 03
Jessica Humpf	Sep 23	Nov 08
Zachariah	Sep 25	Jan 10
Jacob Steele	Sep 25	May 20
Devin Michael Leo	Sep 25	Jul 09
Kendall Scout Wood	Sep 25	Nov 16
Caleb Joseph Keyes	Sep 26	Jul 01
Matthew Michael Daum	Sep 27	Sep 28
Zachary Voelz	Sep 27	Jul 01



<b><u>Loved One's Name</u></b>	<b><u>Birthdate</u></b>	<b><u>Angel Date</u></b>
Blair Sinchai	May 18	<b>Sep 01</b>
Brian Kercheval	Sep 08	<b>Sep 03</b>
Kenneth Davis III	Apr 20	<b>Sep 03</b>
Coleen Paravicini	Jan 19	<b>Sep 05</b>
Makenlee Anne Bibb	Sep 06	<b>Sep 06</b>
Drew Nichols	Apr 22	<b>Sep 06</b>
Matthew Krenzke	Mar 24	<b>Sep 09</b>
Steven Brown	Jul 06	<b>Sep 10</b>
William Matthew Lawrance	May 17	<b>Sep 10</b>
Adam (brother) Bowles	Jul 04	<b>Sep 11</b>
Barry L. Pavy	Jul 05	<b>Sep 11</b>
Allison Lardin	Jan 18	<b>Sep 11</b>
Cooper Tonte	Feb 26	<b>Sep 13</b>
Logan Scherer	Jun 02	<b>Sep 15</b>
Sascha Nolan Simpson	May 28	<b>Sep 15</b>
Kortney Reid	Sep 16	<b>Sep 16</b>
PFC Devon Compton	May 06	<b>Sep 17</b>
Iziah Suhre	Dec 05	<b>Sep 19</b>
Ted Schlechte	Apr 24	<b>Sep 19</b>
Redell Pierre McClaine	Jun 08	<b>Sep 20</b>
Derek Hickman	Apr 30	<b>Sep 21</b>
Sophia Harshbarger	May 29	<b>Sep 24</b>
Austin Robinson	Nov 14	<b>Sep 26</b>
Michael R. LoCicero	Dec 20	<b>Sep 27</b>
Megan Krzmarzick	Feb 14	<b>Sep 28</b>
Jamison MacKenzie Bell	Jan 11	<b>Sep 28</b>
Matthew Michael Daum	Sep 27	<b>Sep 28</b>
Zachery Groover	Nov 26	<b>Sep 28</b>
Kristopher Hesler	May 16	<b>Sep 29</b>



## Central Indiana Chapter



### *The Compassionate Friends Credo*

We need not walk alone. We are 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](mailto: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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