



The Compassionate Friends of Canada

National Board

Operating Plan 2024 – 2026

Initial Publication – August 2023

INTRODUCTION

The TCF Canada 2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan identified 3 broad strategic areas for the organization, addressing Community and Chapter, People, and Financial Sustainability. The 2020 - 2023 and 2024 – 2026 Operating Plans provide a more detailed framework for the specific activities to be undertaken by the TCF Canada Board for the relevant three-year period.

The initial Operating Plan was approved by the Board in July 2020 and has been renewed with minor updates to reflect changes in Board members. It may be further amended or updated from time to time as the Board considers necessary.

BACKGROUND

The Compassionate Friends is an international, not-for-profit, volunteer-based, peer-support network, offering friendship, understanding, grief education and hope for the future to families who have experienced the death of a child at any age, from child to adult, and from any cause.

The Compassionate Friends was founded in the UK in 1969 and has since spread around the globe. The first Canadian chapter was established in Winnipeg MB in January 1977. As of July 2023, there are 47 active Canadian chapters in every province from Victoria BC to St. John's NL, with the current exception of Prince Edward Island. Chapters provide local support to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings through monthly Sharing Circles and other activities, such as an annual Candle Lighting, Butterfly Release and/or social events. Chapters operate autonomously but fall under the umbrella of the TCF Canada National Board.

TCF Canada is registered as an incorporated business through *Corporations Canada* and as a charitable organization with *Revenue Canada*. The national website is www.TCFCanada.net. The work of TCF Canada and its participating chapters is governed by the *Seven Principles* and *Sharing Circle Guidelines*. The Principles are summarized below.

The Seven Principles of The Compassionate Friends

1. TCF offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings.
2. TCF believes that bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings can help each other toward a positive resolution of grief.
3. TCF reaches out to all bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings across artificial barriers of religion, race, economic status or ethnic group.
4. TCF understands that every member has individual needs and rights.
5. TCF helps bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings primarily through local chapters.
6. TCF Chapters belong to their members.
7. TCF Chapters are coordinated nationally to extend help to each other and to support individual bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings.

The TCF Canada Board provides leadership and support to chapters through a variety of services. These services include chapter development, a national newsletter, various resource documents, including grief information leaflets, and training. The Board will consider offering additional services in response to chapter needs and as resources become available.

OVERVIEW

This plan will focus the activities of the TCF Canada Board on expanding support to bereaved parents and their families by improving support to chapters, extending services to meet evolving needs, raising the public profile and financial stability of TCF Canada, and involving both Board and non-Board members who have appropriate interest and expertise.

The framework for these activities has four components: “Chapter Support”, “On-line Services”, “Governance”, and “Organizational Development”. “Chapter Support” will continue to be the primary focus, with “On-Line Services” as an area for growth as resources and needs permit. “Governance” is a necessary but lower priority activity to retain our charitable organization status with the Canada Revenue Agency and Corporations Canada. “Organizational Development” will ensure the ongoing viability of TCF Canada.

COMMITTEES

The Board activities under the main headings will be undertaken by Committees comprising Board and non-Board members. The President is an ex-officio member of all Committees. The Committees and their objectives are presented below.

CHAPTER SUPPORT

Chapter Development

Purpose: To advise and assist Chapters with start-up and on-going operations

Members: Eileen Bond, Andy Bond

National Newsletter

Purpose: To publish a monthly / quarterly newsletter to advise and inform Chapters

Members:

Resources

Purpose: To refresh and update TCF grief information pamphlets, and develop templates for brochures, posters, business cards, event programs et al

Members:

Training

Purpose: To provide orientation and skill development for new and experienced Chapter Leaders and Circle Facilitators

Members: Andy Bond, Eileen Bond

ON-LINE SERVICES

Website

Purpose: To develop and maintain a public website and Chapter locator as the primary contact point for TCF Canada and chapter resource centre.

Members: Larry Cadman

Facebook

Purpose: To host separate closed groups for Bereaved Parents, Siblings, Men in Grief, and Chapter Leadership

Members: Donna Rodin, Barb Kachur, Evelyn Howden-Smith

Virtual Circles

Purpose: To provide on-line support group(s) for parents unable to attend Chapter meetings

Members: N Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Ottawa Chapters

GOVERNANCE

Governance

Purpose: To review, update and maintain our corporate registration, charitable status, Constitution, Bylaws, Policy Manual, and related documents

Members: Donna Rodin, Andy Bond

Archives

Purpose: To oversee the collection and retention of documents relevant to the history and ongoing operations of TCF Canada

Members: Susan Doyle Lawrence (Storage Room), Larry Cadman (Drive)

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

National Outreach (New activity)

Purpose: To raise the public profile and awareness of TCF across Canada

Members: Barbara Noseworthy, Karen Destun

Funding (New activity)

Purpose: To establish a stable source of funds to support TCF Canada activities

Members:

REPORTING

A representative of each Committee will report on their activities at the monthly meetings of the TCF Canada Board.

The Board will provide feedback, advice, guidance, and direction to the Committees as necessary.