

## SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

### 1. TCF offers friendship and understanding to bereaved parents.

- We have learned that the death of our child has caused a pain that can best be understood fully by another bereaved parent.
- Knowing that all need love and support, we reach out as our own grief subsides to those who still feel alone and abandoned.

### 2. TCF believes that bereaved parents can help each other toward a positive reconciliation of their grief.

- We understand that each parent must find his or her own way through grief.
- We know that expressing thoughts and feelings is part of the healing process.
- We offer an opportunity for sharing and learning from other bereaved parents.
- We do not offer professional psychotherapy or counselling.
- We seek the cooperation and the support of the professional community but do not depend on it for supervision or formal guidance.
- We welcome the opportunity to share with the professional community what we have learned about the needs of bereaved parents.

### 3. TCF reaches out to all bereaved parents across artificial barriers of religion, race, economic class, or ethnic group.

- We espouse no specific religious or philosophical ideology.
- We support our activities through voluntary contributions and assess no dues or fees.

- We do not participate in legislative or political controversy.
- We express our individual views on controversial subjects with respect and consideration for those who may disagree with us.

### 4. TCF understands that every bereaved parent has individual needs and rights.

- We never suggest that there is a correct way to grieve or that there is a preferred solution to the emotional and spiritual dilemmas raised by the death of our children.
- Everyone deserves an opportunity to be heard.
- No one is compelled to speak.
- All have the responsibility to listen.

### 5. TCF helps bereaved parents primarily through local chapters

- We have established local chapters to provide sharing groups that create an atmosphere of openness and honesty.
- We believe that local chapters should be autonomous in all matters except those affecting other chapters or the organization as a whole.
- We believe that chapters succeed most frequently if there are three or more founders, at least two of whom are a year or more from their loss, and including at least one father and one mother.

### 6. TCF chapters belong to their members.

- We treat what is said at meetings as confidential and what we learn about each other as privileged information.
- We recommend that attendance at meetings by the media, by students, or by other observers be permitted only with prior announcements and with the consent of the chapter members.

- We realize that some time must be spent on organizational programs and financial matters but we prefer to keep this to a minimum and out of the regularly scheduled TCF meetings.

### 7. TCF chapters are coordinated nationally to extend help to each other and to individual bereaved parents everywhere.

- We maintain a national office to serve us by assisting in the development of new chapters, by offering support and consultation to existing chapters, and by responding to bereaved parents where there is no local chapter.
- We have learned that it is often easier and more effective to provide program material and educational services by working together at the national or regional level than to work alone.
- We seek opportunities to share with society the insights our grief has brought us so that future bereaved parents may receive needed understanding and support.
- We encourage other family members, especially siblings, to share in our task of mutual support.
- We acknowledge our responsibility to support our local and national goals by contributing what we can of our time, our talent, and our resources.



## TCF CREDO

**We need not walk alone.**

**We are The Compassionate Friends.**

**We reach out** to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. **Our children have died** at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children 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 and creeds. **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; some of us are struggling to find answers. **Some of us are angry**, filled with guilt, or in deep depression; 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 our children. **We are all seeking and struggling** to build a future for ourselves, but **we are committed** to building that future together, as we reach out to each other in love and 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!**

*Joe Rousseau, Saginaw MI*

*NOTE: The Compassionate Friends Credo, written by Joe Rousseau while attending a TCF USA National Board retreat in November of 1982, was unanimously approved as the "official credo". It was adopted by the Board of TCF Canada in November 1986.*

## COMPASSION

Compassion is a simple word, yet it is not easy to achieve. Compassion is not approval. Compassion means suspending one's own critical and advisory inclinations in order to help someone. Compassion is leaving oneself outside. What the other person may need is often not at all what the compassionate helper believes to be helpful. The helper may want to give advice, or talk about himself/herself. What the griever needs, however, may well be a listener, a focused attention on the griever and on the loss the griever sustained. Often, compassion means not doing something, listening rather than speaking, crying rather than comforting words. Compassion is not an easy task, but it is among the greatest gifts we can give to each other.

*Sascha Wagner, Wintersun*

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**For support in your area contact:**



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF CANADA**

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# Seven Principles for Bereaved Parents



## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF CANADA

An international peer support organization for bereaved parents and their surviving children