

Seven Principles for Bereaved Siblings

- I. **TCF recognizes that siblings are an integral part of the family unit.**
Sibling grief reconciliation is critical to the health of the total family unit. Chapters offer grief resources that provide the surviving children of The Compassionate Friends, and their parents, with the information necessary to support and understand the healing process of a grieving child. Where available, Sibling Grief support groups are invaluable.
- II. **TCF offers friendship and understanding to our surviving children.**
The death of a brother or sister, no matter the age or circumstances of death, causes pain that other bereaved siblings understand best. We reach out with love and support to those siblings who are feeling alone and abandoned.
- III. **TCF believes that our surviving children can help each other work toward a positive reconciliation of their grief.**
We support each bereaved sibling as they find their way through grief. We know that expressing thoughts and feelings are part of the healing process. We offer an opportunity for sharing with, and learning from, other bereaved siblings.
- IV. **TCF reaches out to all our surviving children regardless of religion, race, economic class, or ethnic group.**
We express our individual views on controversial subjects with respect and consideration for those who may disagree with us. We have no religious affiliations, nor do we participate in legislative or political controversy. All surviving children are welcome at the chapter meetings regardless of religion, race, economic class, orientation, or ethnic group.
- V. **TCF understands that our surviving children have individual needs and rights.**
We recognize that there is more than one way to grieve and that bereaved siblings and bereaved parents grieve in different ways and timelines. We know that these differing grief journeys can cause additional stress and conflict in an already grief-stricken family. We remain nonjudgmental about individual needs and grief styles. We
- VI. **TCF recognizes that the term "bereaved sibling" encompasses various age groups.**
We understand that the death of a brother or sister affects not only young children but adult siblings as well. We show sensitivity to all siblings regardless of age. Age groupings for sharing meetings are suggested as: 8-12 years, 13-17 years, 18 and over, with flexibility. A trusted professional is recommended to assist in facilitating groups under the age of 18 years.
- VII. **TCF sibling group meetings belong to their members.**
Attendance at sibling group meetings by those other than bereaved siblings is allowed only with prior consent of all group members.

Adopted by TCF Canada 2003



Sibling Credo

We are the SURVIVING SIBLINGS
of The Compassionate Friends.
We are brought together by the
deaths of our brothers and sisters.

Open your hearts to us,
but have patience with us.

Sometimes we will need
the support of our friends.

At other times we need
our families to be there.

Sometimes we must walk alone,
taking our memories with us,
continuing to become the
individuals we want to be.

We cannot be our dead
brother or sister.

However, a special part
of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died,
our lives changed.

We are living a life very different
from what we envisioned
and we feel the responsibility
to be strong even when we feel weak.

Yet we can go on
because we understand better
than many others the value of family
and the precious gift of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten
mourners that we sometimes are,
but to walk together to face our

tomorrows as
SURVIVING SIBLINGS

of The Compassionate Friends

The Survivor

You followed in their footsteps,
Or they in yours.

You looked up to them,
Or they to you.

You shared in the good times,
You shared in the bad.

A bond grew through the years,
A bond so very strong.

No time will ever weaken

The memories that you made.

The blood you share,

Will always be,

And that is why—you care.

Gary Kachur

In memory of his brother Ron

For support in your area contact:



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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF CANADA

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF CANADA



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