



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



January, 2018

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER

Currently Open

MAILINGS & DATABASE

Jane & Steve Gabriel

Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

TREASURER

Ruby Doyle

Son, Patrick Michael Doyle

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

Stewart Levett

Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

Chaela Christianson

Son, Damon Vincent Christianson

SC MEMBER/WELCOME PACKETS

Leta Levett

Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

Ron Agee

Daughter, Melody Victoria Agee

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Any of these members may be contacted to talk about your loss:

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT - 719-531-5488 *

LEUKEMIA

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL - 719-282-1924 *

ADULT CHILD / SUDDEN DEATH

CHAECLA CHRISTIANSON - 719-687-6688 *

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT

RAYE WILSON - 303-814-9478

MOTORCYCLE DEATH

STEVE SEIFERT - 719-331-6455

*Steering Committee

Welcome

Our support group meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are open to the parents, grandparents and older siblings of your loved one. We meet at the First Baptist Church downtown at 317 E. Kiowa. We understand your pain; won't you let us help you through your grief?

Our next meeting will be on January 18, 2018.

The death of your child is probably the most traumatic, life-changing event that you will ever experience. The Compassionate Friends is an organization of parents who have also lost a child to death. Each of us has experienced the deep, searing pain that you are feeling now. Each of us has turned to other parents who were farther into their grief journey for guidance, support and understanding. This is done through our monthly meetings, our newsletter, our website, our Telephone Friend program, our library and our e-mail program. Each month parents find our meeting to be a safe place where they can talk about their pain and problems with others who are uniquely qualified to understand; bereaved parents offer gentle suggestions or often simply listen. We invite you to bring a friend to your first few meetings until you feel a level of comfort with the group. Do not be surprised if we talk about the happy times with our children, the wonderful memories and the various methods we have created to keep our children close to us. It is here that many bereaved parents find hope as those who are more seasoned in their grief shine the light of experience to help illuminate each grief path. We have no dues. We are self-sustaining through donations and the generosity of so many in our community.





TCF asks for donations in memory of our children who have died.

Our chapter is funded solely through donations; therefore we sincerely appreciate your support. Your generosity helps us send newsletters, purchase brochures and cover the many expenses to help grieving families in our community. All donations are tax deductible. You and your child's name will be noted in the next newsletter. Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation by 50-100%. Please help us help others by making a LOVE GIFT today.

We are but a moment's sunlight, fading in the grass...

by Susan Jackson - From "When You Lose a Child" Online blog

Today is December 7th. 2010. Mason died one year ago today. We've reached the first anniversary of losing one of our own, one of our children. There are names given to people left behind after a death. A wife who loses her husband is called a widow. A husband who loses his wife is called a widower. A child who loses his parents is called an orphan. But there's no word for a parent who loses a child. We all experience loss during our lifetime, no one is spared. The loss you can reasonably anticipate, like the death of an aged parent, though heart-breaking, is at least within the realm of what most of us would consider to be the natural order of life. A parents' death severs a life-long connection to the person who first gave you unconditional love, the person who created a refuge where innocence could unfold into wisdom, the person who gave you legs to stand on and wings to fly. I thought my heart would break when my parents passed. But parents die before their children. You always knew it would be so.

It is said that when a parent dies you lose your past, but when a child dies, you lose your future. I think this is especially true when a baby or young child passes. With the death of a young adult, the grieving is more for the future *they* have lost, a future being fully realized as you watch nearby, sometimes in amazement, sometimes in amusement. The absence of Mason's physical presence in our lives is palpable. But on occasion I am fortunate enough to sense him, nearby, only a breath away. In trying to understand why life that is so lovingly given to each of us, is at times so cruelly taken away, I asked questions that cannot be answered, not in this lifetime. When I stopped asking and started listening, I began to see. It's not about finding answers, it's about having faith, faith in the Divine. Faith comes first, then understanding and hope follow. Even so, a year later, we still struggle to accept that when the phone rings, Mason won't be on the other end, or when a car pulls up in front of the house, Mason won't be getting out. Mason won't be sharing his wit, his wisdom, his enthusiasm, his energy or his light. Or will he? My resolve is to take a leap of faith, believing without benefit of proof and learning to see with my soul and listen with my heart. So, I talk to Mason and he hears, I smile at Mason and he sees, I believe in Mason and he knows. He's always been gifted.

**"Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe. It is not enough that a thing be possible for it to be believed."
– Voltaire**



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Welcome New Friends.

Simona Hampton - Son, Dequan Maiik Hampton

Deb Murphy - Son, William Murphy

At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief. Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person or just the right words that will help you in your grief or comfort you. Remember we have all been there and even though circumstances may be different we really do understand. You are not alone.

TO OUR SEASONED MEMBERS

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together. Each meeting the pain will not always be this bad it really does get better with wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.

Digital Picture Frame - If you've been to one of our monthly meeting then you've noticed our large digital picture frame displaying picture of our children. Should you be interested in adding your child's picture to our display, please bring a picture to scan to our meeting or (preferred) email the picture, along with child information to Stew Levett at PikesPeakTCF@gmail.com. Pictures will be returned after they have been scanned and your child's slide completed.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

TCF National Office

P.O. Box 3656

Oak Brook, IL 60522

630-990-0010 or toll free 877-969-0010

Email:

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

WEBSITES:

Pikes Peak - www.TCFPikesPeakChapter.org

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TCFPikesPeak>

National - www.compassionatefriends.org



**Michaela R. Christianson
In Loving Memory of Her Son
Damon Vincent Christianson**

**Chaplain Gene Steinkirchner
C.S.P.D.**



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Robbie Rickman	Dec 1	Jean Rickman Place
Joshua Aaron Munkirs	Dec 1	Dana & Laura Munkirs
Abraham Daniel Boukhari	Dec 2	David & Deborah Woodrow
Anthony Crisp	Dec 3	Trudy Crisp
Dwayne Stoppel	Dec 3	Pearl Stoppel
John Doggett	Dec 7	Sandra Searles
John Walther	Dec 8	Joseph Walther
Zachary Nathaniel James McClary	Dec 9	Gloria & James Olsen
Trinity Sumlin	Dec 11	Sheryl Sumlin
Matthew Stockwell	Dec 11	Sally Stockwell
Daniel J. Whisler	Dec 11	JoAnn Mowdy
Kirsten Amanda Teran	Dec 12	Donna Loughridge
Rachael Samulenck	Dec 12	Megan Samulenck Gleason
Kristopher Lohrmeyer	Dec 13	Dan & Lori Lohrmeyer
Marcus Richards	Dec 14	Martha Williams
Gavin Perez	Dec 14	Shannon Paolini
Jayden Pierce	Dec 15	Dawn Hendricks
Noelle Pearl	Dec 15	Michelle Fleming
Chris Reiter	Dec 18	Sharon Reiter
Nathaniel Hughes	Dec 19	Jim Hughes
Timothy Patrick Shea	Dec 22	Joe & Paula Shea
Katie Kennedy	Dec 23	Van & Kathy Kennedy
Nicolas Jay Broughton	Dec 23	Rose Broughton
Trevor "T.J." Franks	Dec 24	Penny Franks
Robert (Robby) George, Jr.	Dec 25	Robert & Margaret George
Sheri Cavin	Dec 27	Susan & Alan Cavin
Noah Christian Wilder	Dec 27	Nicole Wilder
Kyle Curtis Hill	Dec 28	Ursula Hill
Anthony Anselmo	Dec 28	Vicki & Frank Anselmo
Joshua Samuel Shelton	Dec 28	Cherie Berglund-Hensley
Megan Lane	Dec 28	Sandra Gail Lane
Chelsey Ann Kear	Dec 29	Tami Kear
Lindsay Jean Morris	Dec 30	Linda Morris
Ernest Price Hurst, Jr.	Jan 2	Nancy Hurst
Adam Roy Hodges	Jan 3	JoAnn Ewing
Andrew Talley II	Jan 4	Jackie Talley
Addie Marie Vande Stouwe	Jan 4	Shawn Roberson
Jamie Jackman	Jan 5	Sherry Jackman & Knelson Spooner
Alyanna Livingston	Jan 5	Kirstin Klinkerman
Nicole Megan Yagi	Jan 6	Jackie & Dennis Yagi
Ramon E.G. Lucero	Jan 6	Diana & Kimber Michael
John Daniel Ringo	Jan 8	Paul Ringo, Angela Randle
Ronald Eugene Peterson	Jan 9	Ron Peterson
Kyle Snyder	Jan 9	LuAnn Walters
Nickolas Robert Vingren	Jan 10	Dale Vingren
Terry A. Shank	Jan 11	Carol Vierling
Tyrone Binnebose	Jan 11	Natasha Binnebose
Vadah Lynne Blocker	Jan 12	Sterling Blocker
Seth Fieser	Jan 17	Megan Fieser
Jaclyn Williams	Jan 20	Sandy & Rob Williams
Brody Richard Cisneros	Jan 21	Julie & Will Cisneros
Adriano Bermudez	Jan 22	C.J. LaPointe
Mallory Paulene Hendrickson	Jan 22	Celine & Gary Hendrickson
Eric Evans	Jan 23	Linda & Dick Evans
Jody Elizabeth Houtz	Jan 23	Jane and Chris Houtz
Corey Reynolds	Jan 23	Barb Reynolds
Kade Riefenberg	Jan 24	Andy Gibson
Blaine Joseph Steele	Jan 24	Paul Petta
Sarah Sunshine Wedekind	Jan 25	Lorry Pearson
Gregory Frayne	Jan 25	Marion Frayne
Stephen Lucas Tyler	Jan 25	Catherine Tyler
Kevin Michael Burns	Jan 27	Stan & Willie Burns
Aaron Lee Gallob	Jan 27	Lou & Erma Gallob
Sean O'Connor	Jan 28	Dennis & Tracy O'Connor
Joshua Cesar Menendez	Jan 28	Julio Menendez, Dianna Castellanos
Shawn Adelgren	Jan 31	Russ & Dee Adelgren
Robert "Bobby" Slaughter	Jan 31	Robert Slaughter, Ginger Slaughter



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Forever Age</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Mia Allyson Gardiner	16 years	Dec 4	Peri Gardiner
Eric Sutton Skinner	19 years	Dec 4	David & Gail Skinner
Lisa Marie O'Briant	22 years	Dec 5	Gary & Mary O'Briant
Renee Lee Seiberlich	1 year	Dec 5	Joe & Leda Seiberlich
Ian Vincent	31 years	Dec 8	Vicky Campbell
Logan Jude Swearingen	6 years	Dec 11	Stephanie & Landon Swearingen
Jackson Ahrold	9 years	Dec 12	Gretchen, Doug & Tina Blenkarn
Marc Darby	12 years	Dec 12	Lori & Steve Darby
Joseph Gentry Richardson	1 year	Dec 13	Miriam Gentry
Mallory Jane Hooper	25 years	Dec 13	Bill & Beth Hooper
Isaac Sartain	12 years	Dec 14	Gregory Sartain
Logan Riley	Stillborn	Dec 17	Heather Claypool
Ember Maria Arthur	30 years	Dec 17	Jeanette Newville
Samuel Hesselberg	17 years	Dec 18	Steve & Leanne Hesselberg
Audrina Elyse Escano	18 years	Dec 20	Chris & Christina Pearson
Anthony Anselmo	22 years	Dec 21	Vicki & Frank Anselmo
Tyler Glicken	19 years	Dec 22	Ginger Jones
Patrick Niedringhaus	18 years	Dec 22	Leah & Dave Niedringhaus
Douglas Michael Gratton	23 years	Dec 23	Luci Abrahamson
Nathan Pulham	33 years	Dec 24	Elliot Pulham
Robbie Rickman	21 years	Dec 25	Jean Rickman Place
Henry Rael	37 years	Dec 26	Maria Rael
Chris Reiter	28 years	Dec 27	Sharon Reiter
Kirsten Amanda Teran	23 years	Dec 28	Donna Loughridge
Ariel Allen	3 years	Dec 29	Judy Allen
Rebekah Cano Moore	20 years	Dec 29	Janis Cano
Chris Gettle	51 years	Dec 29	Kathlene Gettle
Mary Hope Burton	7 years	Dec 30	Jim & Betty Burton
Steven Bondurant	33 years	Dec 31	Karen Bondurant
Julian King	21 years	Dec 31	Carl Reese & Leonie Cramer
Matthew Flint	26 years	Dec 31	Cathy Flint
Michael Zwirlein	25 years	Dec 31	Chris Zwirlein
Scott Lauther	43 years	Jan 1	Marte Lauther
Elijah Sharp	23 years	Jan 1	Jason & Lana Sharp
Susan Gordon	17 years	Jan 4	Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon
Pierce Ford	29 years	Jan 5	Jeff & Cookie Ford
Savannah L. Burke	6 weeks	Jan 12	Herman & April Burke
Michelle Howie	32 years	Jan 12	Annette Howie
Fred Chavez	32 years	Jan 14	Annette Atchison
Bernie O'Grady	18 years	Jan 17	Elizabeth Alvar
Jim Eley	43 years	Jan 19	Judith Eley
Sara M. Losasso	14 years	Jan 19	Cindy Losasso
Joshua W. Lewis Gohlke	20 years	Jan 19	Karen Swank
Robert Romaine Bonsaint	33 years	Jan 20	Linda Fletcher
Jacob Sanchez	3 months	Jan 22	Denise Langhorst, Janine McDonough
Nicholas Ryan Nelson	23 years	Jan 22	Marley Nelson Rhoads
Mark Van Matre	46 years	Jan 24	Patricia Van Matre
Patrick Michael Doyle	21 years	Jan 27	Ruby Doyle
Clinton Boland	24 years	Jan 27	Velda Fields
Megan Lane	18 years	Jan 27	Sandra Gail Lane
Gregory Randall Davis	18 years	Jan 29	Cora Davis
Ernest Price Hurst, Jr.	44 years	Jan 30	Nancy Hurst
Amy Mae Lugenbeel	2 years	Jan 31	Terry & Barb Lugenbeel
Juan Marine	29 years	Jan 31	Pamela Marine



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

Grief

by Gwen Flowers

I had my own notion of grief.
I thought it was the sad time
That followed the death of someone you love.
And you had to push through it
To get to the other side.
But I'm learning there is no other side.
There is no pushing through.
But rather,
There is absorption.
Adjustment.
Acceptance.
And grief is not something you complete,
But rather, you endure.
Grief is not a task to finish
And move on,
But an element of yourself-
An alteration of your being.
A new way of seeing.
A new definition of self.

The Oak Tree

by Johnny Ray Ryder Jr

A mighty wind blew night and day
It stole the oak tree's leaves away
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark
Until the oak was tired and stark

But still the oak tree held its ground
While other trees fell all around
The weary wind gave up and spoke.
How can you still be standing Oak?

The oak tree said, I know that you
Can break each branch of mine in two
Carry every leaf away
Shake my limbs, and make me sway

But I have roots stretched in the earth
Growing stronger since my birth
You'll never touch them, for you see
They are the deepest part of me

Until today, I wasn't sure
Of just how much I could endure
But now I've found, with thanks to you
I'm stronger than I ever knew

Life Must Go On

~Navaho Prayer~

Grieve for me for I would grieve for you.
Then brush away the sorrows and the tears.
Life is not over, but begins anew,
with courage you must greet the coming years.
To live forever in the past is wrong;
can only cause you misery and pain.
Dwell not on memories overlong,
with others you must share and care again.
Reach out and comfort those who comfort you;
recall the years, not only for a while.
Nurse not your loneliness; but live again.
Forget not. Remember with a smile.

Winter Memories

Jeremiah Sundown TCF Nashville, TN

The days are getting colder,
and the first snow's not too far off.
It used to be so pretty
gently falling from aloft.
But the snow won't be as pretty,
as it gathers on the ground,
'cause there'll be a snowman missing,
my son is not around.
The playing children's laughter,
used to be a special song,
but this year will be different,
without my son to sing along.
The song has lost its music,
and it'll be just another day,
as I gaze down from my window
and watch the children play.
But the snow will again be pretty,
in a far off distant time,
and we'll build snowmen together
and we'll never look behind.
For now, I'll remain with memories,
and the melting snow will fade,
but he builds snowmen to his heart's content,
because he now lives where snow is made.

*People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.*
~ Maya Angelou ~



Seeking Contributors

We are always looking for material from our chapter members to include in this newsletter. It is the perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with all of us. Tell us about the special things you did in their memory or simply tell us the special things you will always remember and keep close to your heart. It is a beautiful way for us to get to know more about your loved one. It unites us as a bereaved family and it will help us all to become closer. Where there is unity, there is strength, strength that we can give to and draw from one other.

We would also welcome any book reviews. If you have read a book that has helped you on your journey please tell us about it. There are many, many grief books out there. Some will be more healing than others. It is so helpful to be guided to the right ones. Please forward any writings, poems, book reviews etc. to Stew Levett PikesPeakTCF@gmail.com or you may use the U.S. Mail and send it to me at 160 El Dorado Ln., Colorado Springs, CO 80919.

Button, Button, We'll Make You A Button!

We have purchased a photo button machine and we are ready to start making your picture buttons. Bring 2 copies of the SAME picture to your next meeting and we will have it ready for you the following month. THIS IS A FREE SERVICE TO YOU.

Please bring your pictures to any of our monthly meetings. We will need a 3"x5" or 4"x6" photo of your child but would prefer NOT using the original photo. We suggest using Walgreens who can quickly make good 4"x6" copies from your original.

For best results make sure the photo of your child is centered and not too close to the edge or the results may not turn out as expected.

We are requesting one photo button per family to get started. Thereafter we will be able to make additional buttons for each member of the family as time and labor allows. Also, for those who have lost more than one child, we will gladly make a button for each child.

SURVIVING YOUR CHILD'S SUICIDE

The suicide of a child of any age presents unique circumstances that can intensify and prolong the mourning process for parents, family members and friends. Suicide is believed to be a reaction to overwhelming feelings of loneliness, worthlessness, helplessness, hopelessness and depression. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in the United States among 10-14 year olds and 15-24 year olds, and the second leading cause among 25-34 year olds.

While mental illness often plays a role in suicide, not everyone who dies by suicide is mentally ill. Some families have experienced years of treatments, hospitalizations and medications with their child, while some experience none at all.

Sometimes there are warning signs of the person's intentions. However, clues may be so disguised that even a trained professional or counselor may not recognize them. Occasionally there are no discernible signs and the child's suicide becomes a catastrophic decision that may never be understood.

There is a change taking place in the terminology when talking about suicide. The term "died by suicide" is being adopted. This new language is reflective of the changes in our understanding and compassion as we move away from the harsh statement and stigma of the words "committed suicide", which can be offensive to families whose children have taken their own lives.

After Suicide

Feelings of shock, denial, guilt, anger, and depression are a normal part of grief. These feelings can be especially heightened when a child has died by suicide.

The suicide of a child can raise painful questions, doubts and fears. You may question why your love was not enough to save your child and may fear that others will judge you to be an unfit parent. Both questions may raise strong feelings of failure. Many bereaved parents wrestle with these feelings, but in time come to a place where they understand their child made the choice to end their life.



Love Gift Donations

A "Love Gift" is a wonderful way to remember your child, while also helping our TCF chapter "reach out" to bereaved families. There is no charge to attend meetings, use the library, or receive the newsletter. We depend solely upon these gifts, monetary or gifts-in-kind, to support our chapter. You may choose to donate a tax deductible "Love Gift" at any time. Let us be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

Our chapter exists entirely through your donations which are tax deductible. A Love Gift is money donated to the chapter in memory of your child who has died. If you feel a Love Gift is an appropriate way to honor the memory of your child, please consider a donation, large or small. Please fill out the form located in this newsletter and mail it to the address listed. All pictures submitted will be electronically scanned and added to our electronic Child Remembered "Picture Frame" displayed at monthly meetings and then returned to you.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

\$50 or more - Newsletter Sponsor. May include a full page for printing. Please remember to send your page "Copy Ready" as you would like to see it printed in the newsletter.

\$0 to \$50 - A picture, if available, and dedication to be listed in the newsletter. Love Gift donations should be sent directly to our treasurer, Ruby Doyle whose address is listed on the Love Gift Donation Form. Wouldn't you like to make a dedication to your child and help our chapter?

**⇒ Send Love Gifts to Ruby Doyle, 6552 Lange Drive Colorado Springs, Co 80918 ⇒
Thank you for contributing and supporting the work of our local chapter!**

LOVE GIFT DONATION

Costs are rising. We need your Love Gift to support our chapter & newsletter! If you can, please help.

I would like to make a donation ☐ in Memory of ☐ a Chapter Gift

In loving memory of: _____

Love Gift Donation: \$ _____ Please make check payable to: The Compassionate Friends

Cut and mail this form with your Love Gift to: Ruby Doyle – 6552 Lange Dr. – Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Contributor Name & Address: _____

Relationship: ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ Grandson ☐ Granddaughter ☐ Friend ☐ Other

Photo Enclosed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Photo To Be Returned: ☐ Yes ☐ No



SURVIVING YOUR CHILD'S SUICIDE - Continued from Page 7

It is not uncommon for newly bereaved parents to express thoughts of suicide, regardless of how their child has died. Suicide is not inherited. If you are having thoughts of suicide, be gentle with yourself. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 and suicidepreventionlifeline.org provides free and confidential emotional support from a trained counselor and is available 24-hours a day/7-days a week. However, if the thoughts turn into plans to end your life, please seek professional support immediately.

Stigma Associated with Suicide

The stigma associated with suicide in our society as a result of cultural and religious interpretations causes some families to be reluctant to talk openly about the cause of their child's death. Keeping the cause of death a secret can deprive you of the joy of speaking about your child with family and friends and may cause isolation between you and those whose support you will need. Finding support from others who allow you to openly share your feelings about your child's, sibling's or grandchild's suicide can help you to focus on your own healing and survival.

Anger

Anger is a common emotion experienced by parents whose child has died by suicide. Anger may be directed at your child, those you believe failed to help your child, God or just the world in general. You may be angry with yourself because you feel you were unable to save your child. Anger can be destructive but it can also be constructive. Finding constructive ways of expressing your anger can help in the healing process.

Guilt and Regret

Parents, family, friends, classmates, and even coworkers often have feelings of guilt and regret following a child's suicide. "If only" is a phrase many find themselves repeating over and over. Intellectually, you may come to understand that your child's decision to end their life was their own. Emotionally, however, it may take much longer for you to accept that you are not responsible. Be patient with yourself. Letting yourself fully feel an emotion is often an important part of processing and working through it.

Questioning

Often parents ask "why?" Rarely are there clear answers, which may be highly frustrating. At some point, you may begin to realize that there are some questions about the death of your child that will never be answered.

Depression

Lack of energy, sleep problems, inability to concentrate, not wanting to talk with others, and the feeling there is nothing to live for are all normal reactions in bereavement. Situational depression, as opposed to clinical depression, should eventually subside. This type of depression can be helped by integrating moderate physical activity, plenty of rest and water, and a nutritious diet into a daily routine. Try to allow family and friends to take care of you. You don't have to be strong. Try to stay connected with people you value and trust. Talking with others who have been through a similar situation may also help you to cope. If the depression does not appear to lessen over time, you may want to talk with a qualified professional who can determine how best to help you.

Disillusionment

Often parents find themselves in a spiritual crisis and question their beliefs or feel betrayed by God. Religious concerns about the hereafter may also surface. "Why did God let this happen?" is a question we may never know the answer to. Talking about spiritual and philosophical questions with other parents who have experienced a suicide may be helpful. For those with concerns of a spiritual nature, it could be helpful to find a gentle, caring and nonjudgmental member of the same faith and open yourself to that person.

Ideas to Help You Cope

- Talk about your child's death with family members and discuss your feelings of loss and pain. Talk about the good times you had as well as the times that were not so good. It can be helpful and therapeutic to express feelings rather than to internalize them. Giving the gift of tolerance for all family members to grieve in their own way allows each person to feel validated in their own unique grief experience. Keep in mind that everyone's grief journey is as unique as the relationship they had with the child that died. You may find it helpful to write your feelings or to write a letter to your child; this can be a safe place for you to express some of the things you were not able to say before the death.
- Ask for help. Don't be afraid to let your friends know what you need when they ask; they want to help.
- Consider becoming involved with a self-help bereavement group such as The Compassionate Friends. Through sharing with others who have walked a similar path, you may gain some understanding of your reactions and learn additional ways to cope. Seek professional support and family counseling if necessary.

Give yourself time, time and more time. It takes months, even years, to open your heart and mind to healing. Choose to survive and then be patient with yourself. In time, your grief will soften as you begin to heal and you will feel like investing in life again.

This brochure sponsored by The Katrina Tagget Memorial Foundation
in loving memory of Katrina "Kara" Tagget,
daughter of Sara & David, and brother of Blake

Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly - Return Service Requested

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

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January, 2018



The Compassionate Friends
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