



# The Compassionate Friends

## Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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The F-M Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at  
**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
127 2ND AVE E  
WEST FARGO, ND  
Please enter on the west side. Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side.

#### Upcoming Meetings

March 14th  
April 11th

#### Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on March 28<sup>th</sup> @ Fry'n Pan  
TCF National Conference July 19 - 21, 2019 in Philadelphia, PA  
TCF FM Chapter's 13th Annual Walk to Remember - July 27, 2019

#### LOVE GIFTS

Sharon D Cook in memory of her daughter, Tamara Jo "Tammy" Hines  
Don & Linda Bartsch in memory of their son, Brent M Bartsch  
Russell & Anne Johnson in memory of their son, Todd Allan Johnson  
Jim & Jody Kutter in memory of their daughter, Michelle Kutter  
Glennis Olson in memory of their son, Jamie C Olson  
Lee & Luanne Scallon in memory of their son, Jesse Scallon  
We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month.  
Our chapter and all chapters are financed solely through your Love Gifts.  
Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible.  
Thank you for your tax-deductible gifts.

#### OUR CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The 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 they 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 this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a 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. ©2007

#### LOVE

"...Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but, never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into today. Love never goes away..." ~ Darcie Sims

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fry'n Pan restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday March 28<sup>th</sup>. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or [sherylc13@msn.com](mailto:sherylc13@msn.com).

No one is asking us to forget, to turn away from all that we loved and cherished in the one we have lost. We couldn't do that even if we wanted to.

The task before us - and it can take a very long time - is to incorporate this grief and loss into the rest of our lives, so that it doesn't continue to dominate our lives. It's no longer the first thing we think of when we wake up in the morning, or the last thing we relinquish before we sleep.

A child said to his mother, in regards to the outpouring of kindnesses after his father's death. "There are so many good things. There's just one bad thing."

The "bad thing" will always be there, but when it begins to take its place among the good things life offers, we're on our way.

Even in my sadness I will be open to new adventure.

Elisabeth Kubler Ross, Taken from TCF online June 2006

## Why Does Healing Feel Like A Betrayal?

In the first years after my son's death, the mere mention of the word 'healing' made me recoil. Healing. It's a simple, comfort word, right? A concept that all right-minded people believe is a healthy thing, supposedly the ultimate goal for those who are suffering. So why, I used to ask myself, did it feel like a betrayal?

Terminology is a tricky thing. The use of the word 'healing' tends to confuse most loss parents. It's not surprising. We associate healing with 'getting over' something, much as one would if you'd broken a leg and it had healed 'nicely' as doctors are apt to say. If you heal, it means you're better and that you're no longer sick or injured. It means you're back to normal; it means you've got over your injury; it means you're now well. To me, healing seemed an aberration.

If there's one thing loss parents know it's that grieving the death of our child doesn't mean we're sick. Nor are we stuck. Nor do we want to 'move on'. We are grieving. There's no fixing this. Our child is dead. What we yearn for is understanding and not some quack remedy for our devastating loss.

When well-intentioned friends and family used the word around me, it felt as if my grief wasn't being acknowledged. It sounded as if they were sweeping aside the magnitude of my loss. That they felt so distressed at seeing me traumatized that their need to white-wash my soul-crushing grief took precedence over my feelings. I wept for their lack of understanding.

Yet, in these four years since my son was killed, I have learned that healing is possible.

It doesn't look or feel like I thought it would, but the fact is that it can and is happening. A work in progress. Day by hard day. It's tough, grueling grief work. Often, I'm too tired to even contemplate the rest of my life without my son but I sense that healing is happening nonetheless.

And that's because healing following the death of our child is all about transformation. It has nothing whatsoever to do with 'moving on' or 'forgetting'. It's about inner change. It's about becoming the best new version of ourselves as we wrap our heart around our grief. It's about using grief to teach us how to build a new, different life where joy and loss reside together. It's about gently cradling the grief like we would our child and using it to help us towards the light. I liken it to a metamorphosis. This healing changes us to our very core. We are no longer who we were. The death of our child transforms us so profoundly that it's as if we emerge into a new world, never to return to our old pre-loss state.

So why did I reconsider my view on healing?

Before I could do so, I had to crawl my way out of the abyss that was acute raw grief for long enough to catch my breath. Believe me, that took a while, not months but years. And then, as insipid colors began to filter back into my life, what helped me to understand that transformative healing was possible was the slow realization that it was fear that was making me recoil at the idea of it.

Fear? Why did I fear healing? Because it felt like a betrayal. Did other loss parents feel that way too? Most certainly, yes. I was not alone. Almost everyone I spoke to who'd lost a child felt uncomfortable at the mention of the word 'healing'. So, I decided to identify the source of my fear so as to challenge my concept on healing.

Six points to consider if healing feels like a betrayal:

1. If I heal it means I don't love my child enough. Certainly, this was my greatest fear. Rest assured, healing has zero to do with how much you love your child and everything to do with acceptance. Accepting that love is eternal and that I would grieve my child for the rest of my life allowed me to understand that healing wouldn't diminish my grief or love but instead could transform me.

2. If I heal I'm being selfish by putting my needs before those of my dead child. Irrational fear disguised as guilt was hijacking my thoughts and turning them upside down. Learning to parent a dead child is hard work and challenges us in every conceivable way. You'll need energy and focus to undertake grief work as you carry the love of your child within you. Practice self-compassion and self-care, and allow yourself to transform into the best version of you as a loss parent.

3. If I heal it means I'm forgetting my child. Trust that you will never forget your child any more than you'll forget how to breathe. Our children are always with us. Always.

4. If I heal people will think I'm not grieving or that I don't care enough. Grief is as unique as a fingerprint. Each one of us grieves in our own way. Some loss parents are extremely private about their pain, others talk about their loss, and some set up foundations. Whatever your way of grieving, it is yours, as is your healing. No one can take that away from you and neither should they judge. If they do, perhaps it's time to expunge them from your life.

5. If I heal I'll start living life again and that thought frightens me. Living life again will happen slowly and will come from within. It'll be about learning to live in a new way. It'll be a different you, with grief as your teacher and the love for your child guiding you every step of the way.

6. Healing feels like a betrayal and I can't even contemplate such an idea. Give it time. Explore your feelings and identify which ones serve fear and which bring comfort. Don't push the fear away but instead, listen to it and find out why it resides in your heart right next to the love for your child. Trust in your love. It's the love that will conquer the fear. It always does.

Katja

<https://stillstandingmag.com/2019/01/12/why-does-healing-feel-like-a-betrayal/>

“For years I never knew whether the twilight was the  
 ending of the day  
 or the beginning of the night  
 and then, suddenly one day,  
 I understood that this did not matter at all,  
 for time is but a circle,  
 and so there can be no beginning and no ending,  
 and this is how I came to know that birth and death  
 are one,  
 and it is neither the coming or the going that  
 is of consequence.  
 What is of consequence is the beauty that one gathers  
 in this interlude called life.”  
 From "Come Walk Among the Stars," by Winston Abbott

### THE BUMPY ROAD

The other day I sat alone and realized my heart was not as heavy.  
 Oh, there are still times when I miss my child desperately, but I seem  
 to rebound sooner now.

Then the phone rang; another mother called to lean on me. She  
 must have known that I was ready. I listened, she shared and oh how I  
 felt for her. When we said good-bye, I sat again but not as alone this  
 time. New strength and pride came in knowing I had lent a helping  
 hand.

My child's death has taught me so much new, a lot I wished I  
 had never known. But since I do now know what others face, perhaps  
 the bumpy road I've traveled can be made a little smoother for  
 another.  
 ~ A Bereaved Mother

### A PROMISE

The colors of life change as we go through grief.  
 We begin black and white;  
 Then gray settles over us, seeping into our pores,  
 surrounding us,  
 Smothering us for a long period of time; then slowly  
 the colors change.  
 We may not even be aware of their changing til one  
 day we see a rainbow.  
 And know it was meant for us.  
 ~ Faye Harden, TCF/Tuscaloosa, Alabama

### BILL OF RIGHTS FOR THE BEREAVED

1. Do not make me do anything I do not wish to do.
2. Let me cry.
3. Allow me to talk about the deceased.
4. Do not force me to make quick decisions.
5. Let me act strange sometimes.
6. Let me see that you are grieving too.
7. When I am angry, do not discount it.
8. Do not speak to me in platitudes.
9. Listen to me, **please**.
10. Forgive me my trespasses, my rudeness

### THE EXISTENCE OF LOVE

I had thought that your death was a waste and a destruction, a  
 pain of grief hardly to be endured. I am only beginning to learn that  
 your life was a gift and a growing and a loving left with me. The  
 desperation of death destroyed the existence of love, but the fact of  
 death cannot destroy what has been given. I am learning to look at  
 your life again instead of your death and your departing.  
 ~ Marjorie Pizer

### The Pit of Grief

The day my child died, I fell into the pit of grief. My  
 friends watched me struggle through daily life, waiting for the  
 person I once was to arise from the pit, not realizing she is gone  
 forever. The pit is full of darkness, heartache and despair; it  
 paralyzes your thoughts, movements and ability to think. The  
 pit leaves you forever changed, unable to surface the person  
 you once were.

Some of my pre-grief friends gather around the top of the  
 pit, waiting for the old me to appear before their eyes, not  
 understanding what's taking me so long to emerge. After  
 all...in their eyes, I've been in the pit for quite some time. Yet,  
 in my eyes, it seems as if I fell in only yesterday.

Not all of my pre-grief friends gathered at the top of the  
 pit. Some are helping me with the climb out of the darkness.  
 They climb side by side with me from time to time, but mostly,  
 they climb ahead of me, waiting patiently at each plateau. Even  
 with these friends I sometimes wonder if they are also waiting  
 for the pre-grief me to magically appear before their eyes. Then  
 there are the casual acquaintances (or maybe even family  
 members), you know, the ones who say, "Hi, how are you?"  
 when they really don't care or really don't want to know. These  
 people are the people who sighed in relief that it was my child  
 who died and not theirs. You know, the "better you, not me"  
 attitude.

My post-grief friends are the ones who climb with me, side  
 by side, inch by inch, out of the pit of grief. They have no way  
 of comparing the pit climber to the pre-grief person I once was.  
 You see, they started at the bottom of the pit with me. They are  
 able to reassure me when I need strength. They have no  
 expectations, no memories, and no recollections of how I  
 "should" be. They want me to heal, to smile more often and  
 find joy in life. But they've also accepted the person I've  
 become: the "Person" who is emerging from the pit.  
 ~ Cindy Early, TCF/Seattle-King County, WA

### You Are Not Going Crazy

One of the most common things we hear from  
 bereaved parents is that they think that they are going crazy. If  
 you feel this way, let us assure you that you are not. Grief and  
 the resultant depression, fits of crying, and the feeling you are  
 going to pieces may lead you to these feelings or often to the  
 feeling you no longer want to continue living. It is not  
 uncommon to have these feelings.

But most grief-stricken people do not go crazy or  
 commit suicide. It is most important at these times for you to  
 have someone to talk to – to share your feelings – and for you  
 to be able to verbalize your pain. We of The Compassionate  
 Friends want to help. We encourage you to call on us. We have  
 all been where you are now, and we understand your pain.  
 ~ Fay Harden, TCF/Tuscaloosa, FL

### FOR THE BOTH OF US

As long as I can I will look at this world for both of us.

As long as I can I will laugh with the birds,  
 I will sing with the flowers, I will pray to the stars,  
 for the both of us. As long as I can I will remember  
 how many things on this earth were your joy.  
 And I will live as well as you would want me to live  
 As long as I can.

Sascha - from Wintersun

## OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
BRENT M BARTSCH .....	37	DON & LINDA BARTSCH
KARI RAE BORGEN .....	47	JOHN & KELLY BORGEN
MICHAEL L HANSON .....	36	LARRY & MARY HANSON
TAMARA JO "TAMMY" HINES .....	54	SHARON D COOK
DARRYL ROBERT INFELD .....	58	ROBERT & ELEANOR INFELD
JOHN CLAYTON JACKSON JR.....	71	NORMA JACKSON
KRISSY KEELAN .....	39	DONNA QUAM
MICHELLE KUTTER .....	30	JIM & JODY KUTTER
ZAYNE WILLIAM MALHEIM OLAFSON .....	10	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
JAMIE C OLSON .....	41	GLENNIS OLSON
ANNIKA LORRAINE QUALLEY .....	8	RHONDA & MICHAEL QUALLEY
ANNIKA LORRAINE QUALLEY .....	8	MARLYS KESSEL (great grandmother)
ROY DANA RICHMOND .....	54	THOMAS & AUDREY RICHMOND
CARLA RAE TRUITT .....	55	LORETTA KEISACKER
CHAD VARRIANO.....	47	ANTHONY & KAREL VARRIANO
ROBIN VIGDAL-HOSLER.....	48	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
KATHRYN "KATIE" ELIZABETH WHELTLE.....	37	SHARON & MARK WHELTLE
ASHLEY WIGER .....	32	LARRY & LORI WIGER
PAIGE WIGHTMAN.....	29	DAVID & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN

## ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NANCY PRATT COASH.....	15	PATRICIA PRATT
DOMINIC A COOK .....	2	DINO & HELEN COOK
KEVIN SCOTT COWDEN.....	1	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
RANDY J CYR .....	2	JANICE & JAMES SHELDON
JAYSON P HAUGEN.....	2	PAULETTE HAUGEN
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER.....	15	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
DARRYL ROBERT INFELD.....	10	ROBERT & ELEANOR INFELD
TODD ALLAN JOHNSON .....	4	RUSSELL & ANNE JOHNSON.
KRISSY KEELAN.....	5	DONNA QUAM
BENJAMIN GAFFREY KNIER.....	5	FRANK KNIER & MARY GAFFREY KNIER
MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON .....	19	JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN
STEVEN J NEWARK JR.....	1	JANET & JOHN OURADNIK
JARAD NILLES.....	7	RALPH & CAROLYN NILLES
ZAYNE WILLIAM MALHEIM OLAFSON .....	10	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
JEFFREY M WEBBER.....	2	JUANITA WEBBER

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'  
([www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html) ). If you would like your child's picture and a poem or story posted on this page, please submit them to us at [tcf1313@hotmail.com](mailto:tcf1313@hotmail.com) or mail them to our PO Box (listed on the back of the newsletter). Photos and poems/stories sent to the PO Box will be electronically scanned and then returned to you so please remember to include a return address

Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.

~ from A Grief Observed by C. S. Lewis

## SIBLING PAGE

### EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, and the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me... NEVER.

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality.

Forget? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere—love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say—nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be: Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer. "I am mad. Dave died at the age of 17. I'm angry that my parents have to go through this. I'm confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I'm fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be STRONG."

~ Lisa Ann Jones, TCF/Avoca, PA

### TO MY BROTHER

A laugh when I was crying

A giggle when I needed it

A good reality check when I was being dumb

The truth even when I didn't want to hear it

This is what you gave me

You gave me a person I could laugh with

A person that I could fight with

A person that could make anybody laugh

A person that could make the sun shine on a gloomy day

This is the person you gave me

Fear for where your life was going

Fear of what might happen to you

Fear of how deep you were getting into it

Fear that I might lose you

This is the fear you gave me

Hurt when you would tell a lie

Hurt when you would think I believed you

Hurt when you would blow off plans

Hurt when you would use me

This is the hurt you gave me

Sadness when you let the drugs take your life

Sadness when you left me here

Sadness when I realized I won't ever see your face again

Sadness when I realized you won't ever make me laugh again

This is the sadness you gave me

Memories of playing together when we were little

Memories of serious talks together

Memories of making each other laugh when we were down

Memories of hugs and comfort

These are the memories you left with me

*For Justin and others who've lost loved ones to substance abuse*

### YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

#### Yesterday

You were here and I took it for granted that you would always be here. Telling you I loved you and was proud of you seemed unimportant. There would be time for that when we were older - when we fought less and talked more.

#### Today

I know that time will never come, and I will never have the chance to say these things face-to-face. So I write them and think them and hope you know I mean them now and have always felt them.

#### Tomorrow

Each day the pain and regrets of things left unsaid get easier to deal with. I have begun to realize that you knew how I felt because you felt the same way. And as more tomorrows turn into yesterdays, I will find peace in that knowledge. Someday, somewhere, we will meet again and I will have my chance then.

~ Shannon Odessa Stiener, TCF/Lowell, IN

### DEATH OF A SIBLING: ISSUES FOR THE GRIEVING CHILD

When a sibling dies, the surviving child reacts both to the loss of his or her sibling and to the change in behavior and grief process of his or her parents. A sibling's grief response may be longer or shorter than the parents', and the sibling may have a different understanding of the death. Siblings often are asked numerous questions about their brother or sister's death by their peers and other adults. This can feel overwhelming to a child.

An ill child often receives more attention from parents than a well sibling. The surviving child often believes he or she will get more attention from the parents after the death of the sibling, and then he or she is disappointed when those expectations are not met. The surviving child also may grapple with identity and role issues after the loss. "Am I still a little brother?" "Who's going to take out the garbage now?"

Grieving parents sometimes are overprotective of the remaining siblings, concerned that they may die or become ill as well. Other parents place expectations or unreasonable demands on the remaining siblings to take on the responsibilities and roles or to have the attributes of the deceased sibling.

It is important that parents avoid being either overprotective or over permissive with a grieving sibling— despite the temptation. Care should be taken not to make comparisons between the deceased child and the siblings, as it may lead to the surviving children feeling inadequate. Care also should be taken not to assign inappropriate responsibilities to a child that the deceased sibling used to have— especially responsibilities that are not developmentally appropriate.

For all these reasons, grieving siblings need a lot of reassurance from their parents that they are loved for who they are and that they will be cared for and supported. They need to be reminded that they did not cause their brother's or sister's death. They also should be encouraged to share memories and hold keepsakes of their deceased sibling and to participate in family rituals related to the deceased child.

~ Robin Fiorelli

## The Five Stages of Grief

The stages have evolved since their introduction and have been very misunderstood over the past four decades. They were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages. They are responses to loss that many people have, but there is not a typical response to loss as there is no typical loss.

The five stages, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance are a part of the framework that makes up our learning to live with the one we lost. They are tools to help us frame and identify what we may be feeling. But they are not stops on some linear timeline in grief. Not everyone goes through all of them or in a prescribed order. Our hope is that with these stages comes the knowledge of grief's terrain, making us better equipped to cope with life and loss. At times, people in grief will often report more stages. Just remember your grief is as unique as you are.

**DENIAL:** Denial is the first of the five stages of grief. It helps us to survive the loss. In this stage, the world becomes meaningless and overwhelming. Life makes no sense. We are in a state of shock and denial. We go numb. We wonder how we can go on, if we can go on, why we should go on. We try to find a way to simply get through each day. Denial and shock help us to cope and make survival possible. Denial helps us to pace our feelings of grief. There is a grace in denial. It is nature's way of letting in only as much as we can handle. As you accept the reality of the loss and start to ask yourself questions, you are unknowingly beginning the healing process. You are becoming stronger, and the denial is beginning to fade. But as you proceed, all the feelings you were denying begin to surface.

**ANGER:** Anger is a necessary stage of the healing process. Be willing to feel your anger, even though it may seem endless. The more you truly feel it, the more it will begin to dissipate and the more you will heal. There are many other emotions under the anger, and you will get to them in time, but anger is the emotion we are most used to managing. The truth is that anger has no limits. It can extend not only to your friends, the doctors, your family, yourself and your loved one who died, but also to God. You may ask, "Where is God in this? Underneath anger is pain, your pain. It is natural to feel deserted and abandoned, but we live in a society that fears anger. Anger is strength and it can be an anchor, giving temporary structure to the nothingness of loss. At first grief feels like being lost at sea: no connection to anything. Then you get angry at someone, maybe a person who didn't attend the funeral, maybe a person who isn't around, maybe a person who is different now that your loved one has died. Suddenly you have a structure -- your anger toward them. The anger becomes a bridge over the open sea, a connection from you to them. It is something to hold onto; and a connection made from the strength of anger feels better than nothing. We usually know more about suppressing anger than feeling it. The anger is just another indication of the intensity of your love.

**BARGAINING:** Before a loss, it seems like you will do anything if only your loved one would be spared. "Please God," you bargain, "I will never be angry at my wife again if you'll just let her live." After a loss, bargaining may take the form of a temporary truce. "What if I devote the rest of my life to helping others. Then can I wake up and realize this has all been a bad dream?" We become lost in a maze of "If only..." or "What if..." statements. We want life returned to what it was; we want our loved one restored. We want to go back in time: find the tumor sooner, recognize the illness more quickly, stop the accident from happening...if only, if only, if only. Guilt is often bargaining's companion. The "if onlys" cause us to find fault in ourselves and what we "think" we could have done differently. We may even bargain with the pain. We will do anything not to feel the pain of this loss. We remain in the past, trying to negotiate our way out of the hurt. People often think of the stages as lasting weeks or months. They forget that the stages are responses to feelings that can last for minutes or hours as we flip in and out of one and then another. We do not enter and leave each individual stage in a linear fashion. We may feel one, then another and back again to the first one.

**DEPRESSION:** After bargaining, our attention moves squarely into the present. Empty feelings present themselves, and grief enters our lives on a deeper level, deeper than we ever imagined. This depressive stage feels as though it will last forever. It's important to understand that this depression is not a sign of mental illness. It is the appropriate response to a great loss. We withdraw from life, left in a fog of intense sadness, wondering, perhaps, if there is any point in going on alone? Why go on at all? Depression after a loss is too often seen as unnatural: a state to be fixed, something to snap out of. The first question to ask yourself is whether or not the situation you're in is actually depressing. The loss of a loved one is a very depressing situation, and depression is a normal and appropriate response. To not experience depression after a loved one dies would be unusual. When a loss fully settles in your soul, the realization that your loved one didn't get better this time and is not coming back is understandably depressing. If grief is a process of healing, then depression is one of the many necessary steps along the way.

**ACCEPTANCE:** Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being "all right" or "OK" with what has happened. This is not the case. Most people don't ever feel OK or all right about the loss of a loved one. This stage is about accepting the reality that our loved one is physically gone and recognizing that this new reality is the permanent reality. We will never like this reality or make it OK, but eventually we accept it. We learn to live with it. It is the new norm with which we must learn to live. We must try to live now in a world where our loved one is missing. In resisting this new norm, at first many people want to maintain life as it was before a loved one died. In time, through bits and pieces of acceptance, however, we see that we cannot maintain the past intact. It has been forever changed and we must readjust. We must learn to reorganize roles, re-assign them to others or take them on ourselves. Finding acceptance may be just having more good days than bad ones. As we begin to live again and enjoy our life, we often feel that in doing so, we are betraying our loved one. We can never replace what has been lost, but we can make new connections, new meaningful relationships, new inter-dependencies. Instead of denying our feelings, we listen to our needs; we move, we change, we grow, we evolve. We may start to reach out to others and become involved in their lives. We invest in our friendships and in our relationship with ourselves. We begin to live again, but we cannot do so until we have given grief its time.

**We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name in the newsletter.** Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, PO Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106  
(Please note that if you have already submitted a permission slip, you do not need to submit another one)

Web Sites of Interest - Listing of sites does not imply an endorsement by TCF and is included to provide sources of useful information for bereaved families

- AARP - American Association of Retired People Grief and Loss program includes online articles, publications, support groups, and discussion boards on coping with the loss of a family member ..... [www.aarp.org/families/grief\\_loss](http://www.aarp.org/families/grief_loss)
- AFSP - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is dedicated to advancing knowledge of suicide and the ability to prevent it ..... [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)
- Alive Alone - Designed to benefit bereaved parents whose only child or all children have died by providing a self-help network and newsletter to promote communication and healing..... [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)
- Bereavement Magazine ..... [www.bereavementmag.com](http://www.bereavementmag.com)
- BPUSA - Bereaved Parents of the USA offers support, care, and compassion for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents ..... [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)
- Center for Loss in Multiple Births - By and for parents who have experienced the death of one or more children during a multiple pregnancy, at birth, and through childhood..... [www.climb-support.org](http://www.climb-support.org)
- Centering Corporation - a non-profit organization dedicated to providing education and resources for the bereaved ..... [www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)
- Child miscarriage and child death support..... [www.silentgrief.com](http://www.silentgrief.com)
- griefHaven - provides loving support, hope, and hands just -on tolls for those who have lost a child, brother or sister, or grandchild, and provides education to professionals and others seeking to help bereaved family members rebuild their lives. .... [www.griefhaven.org](http://www.griefhaven.org)
- Griefnet.Org - is an Internet community of persons dealing with grief, death, and major loss. .... [www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)
- Hospice Foundation of America - Includes information about hospice care and programs including bereavement support for families using hospice..... [www.hospicefoundation.org](http://www.hospicefoundation.org)
- MADD - Mothers Against Drunk Drivers has a mission to stop drunk driving, support victims of violent crime, and prevent underage drinking..... [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)
- National SIDS Resource Center - provides information services and technical assistance on sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and related topics. .... [www.sidscenter.org](http://www.sidscenter.org)
- Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep - When a baby or infant has died, Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, through its nationwide network of professional photographers, will arrange a tasteful private sitting at the hospital with no charge for any services or pictures ..... [www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org](http://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org)
- Parents of Murdered Children - provides support and assistance to all survivors of homicide victims while working to create a world free of murder. .... [www.pomc.com](http://www.pomc.com)
- SHARE Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support - SHARE's mission is to serve those who are touched by the tragic death of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, or newborn death ..... [www.nationalshare.org](http://www.nationalshare.org)
- SOS - Survivors of Suicide helps those who have lost a loved one to suicide to resolve their grief and pain in their own personal way ..... [www.survivorsof suicide.com](http://www.survivorsof suicide.com)
- SUDC - Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood Program offers support, information, advocacy, and research opportunities for those touched by the sudden and unexplained death of a child (over 12 months of age). .... [sudc.org](http://sudc.org)
- TAPS - Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors is made up of, and provides services to, all those who have lost a loved one while serving the country in the Armed Forces ..... [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)
- TLC - National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children is dedicated to helping traumatized children and families restore a sense of safety and reduce the effects of trauma; information available about trauma, resources, and training for professionals. .... [www.starr.org/training/tlc](http://www.starr.org/training/tlc)



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**The  
 Compassionate  
 Friends**  
*Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter*  
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

**MISSION STATEMENT:** When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

A SINCERE WELCOME TO ALL COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS...We are a nonprofit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. We offer group support, understanding and friendship. Our purpose is to promote and aid parents and siblings in the positive resolution of the grief they are experiencing and to foster physical and emotional health. If you have questions or wish to talk directly to a member of the Fargo-Moorhead Compassionate Friends, please call any of the numbers listed.

**FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	Paul & Kara Bailey ..... 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen.....701-730-0805
Co-Chapter Leader	Lori Wiger ..... 701-446-7504	Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich ..... 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer..... 701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Sheryl Cvijanovich
Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join	Librarian	Contact Us to Volunteer

LIBRARY INFORMATION: We have an extensive library available. Please feel free to check materials at our next meeting.

**TELEPHONE FRIENDS**

HAVING A BAD DAY OR NIGHT? Feel free to call and talk to any of the following:

- Sheryl Cvijanovich (son, 23 - illness)..... 701-540-3287
- Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident)..... 701-282-4083
- Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness)..... 701-730-0805
- Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage, son, 35-accident & son, 45-cancer) ... 701-235-9622

Love gifts must be received by the 15<sup>th</sup> to be included in the next month's newsletter. If you wish to give a love gift please complete:

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Born \_\_\_\_\_ Died \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: By giving a love gift, you are giving us permission to include your child(ren) in our monthly birthdays and anniversaries.