

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

A self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved families

Inside Valley Forge

Meetings are on the first Thursday of every month, at 7:45 PM (ending at 9:30 PM) We meet at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Founders Hall, Valley Forge Road and Henderson Rds., King of Prussia, PA

For info call Rhonda @ (484) 919-0820

Meeting Schedule and other TCF Events of Interest

General Sharing November 7th

General Sharing December 5th

CORRECTION

December 8th Candle Lighting
Service at 2PM



We encourage newsletter writings from our members. You may also submit articles written by others. Please include the author of all articles submitted. The cut off date for newsletter entries is the 15th of the preceding month. Articles should be sent to the newsletter editor.

There are no dues or fees to belong to the Compassionate Friends, or to receive our newsletter. Your tax deductible donations (which we call love gifts) given in memory of your loved one enables us to defray the cost of the chapter expenses, particularly the newsletter, meetings and our outreach to the newly bereaved. Please include any special tribute you wish printed in the newsletter along with your gift.

If you donate to the United Way at your place of work, and wish your contribution to go to the Valley Forge Chapter of the Compassionate Friends, you may do so by entering the Compassionate Friends—Valley Forge Chapter United Way ID # 04-104.

Please make all checks Payable to:
TCF VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER
Send to Rhonda Gomez

November 2019

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TCF 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.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome our newly bereaved friends, sorry for the cause that brings you. We all have been in the depths of despair, and offer unconditional love and understanding to all of you, it sometimes takes several meetings to feel the full benefit of group sharing. We offer confidentiality, unconditional love and understanding to all of you.

REFRESHMENTS

Refreshments may be donated in memory of loved ones. Please call Rhonda (484) 919-0820 or you may sign the refreshment chart located on the refreshment table.

LOVE GIFTS

Marcia Epstein In memory of **Andrew Voluck**

Jo Ann Sands in memory of her son **Tyler**

Fred A & Irene Sutton in memory of their son **Jim**

Marie A & Samuel Schmeltzer In memory of their son **Samuel**

Rose Yanni In memory of **David Yanni**

Frank Yanni in memory of **David Yanni**

Thomas E Lennen Jr. In loving memory of our son **Scott** on his 56th birthday. Always in our thoughts &

forever in our hearts. Miss and love you always.
Mom & dad.

Ed & Sue Duffy In memory of **Peter** "Loved in life and in Death"

Michael Gormish in memory of his brother
Douglas Moyer

CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

Will be held on December 8 at 2pm at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Founders Hall
Service lasts about an hour, everyone is invited. Refreshments at the end.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

We are asking, would you please receive your newsletter by email. We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefitting from receiving it. We hope it is a help to you while going through your grief, giving you better understanding of your feelings and letting you know "**We need not walk alone**".

We consider this an important function of our program. If you have email, would you consider receiving your newsletter in email format. You will receive your copy earlier if you opt to receive it by email. If you wish to receive your newsletter by email please send Frank Gomez (frank@tcfvalleyforge.org) your full name.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS 23RD WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

Unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

The Worldwide Candle Lighting started in the United States in 1997 as a small Internet observance but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. In 2011, information was submitted to TCF's national website on services in 18 countries outside the United States including 550 services, as this special day continues to grow. This year's event will be the 23th Worldwide Candle Lighting. The event grows larger every year thanks to the many people who see the need for services where none have existed. And as the word continues to spread to more of the bereaved who wish to celebrate lives gone too soon by lighting candles in their home, quietly, perhaps just with friends and family.

SUNDAY - DECEMBER 8, 2019 2:00 PM **SPEAKER: FRED MOUNTJOY**

The deaths of Marilyn & Fred's daughters brought them into TCF. Their twin daughters, Barlyn & Maralin, died shortly after their birth in 1961. There was no TCF at that time. Their third daughter, Marian, was born with inoperable cardiac abnormalities in 1962, & died in 1996. Shortly after her death they attended their local TCF meeting. Marilyn & Fred have been involved with TCF for over 13 years. Fred is well known in The Compassionate Friends organization. He was a presenter at our Eastern Pennsylvania Regional Conference in 2005 & 2007, & also a speaker at the 2007 E. PA Regional conference. His presentations were well received.

THE VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

will hold a candle lighting remembrance service on December 8th at 2 PM at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in the Fellowship Hall. (same place as our monthly sharing secessions are held). We chose 2 PM for our local service so that it would be available to everyone, including those who do not drive at night. We also urge you to light a candle in your home at 7 PM. We hope you will take this opportunity to join us in remembering our children & siblings who have died, but will never be forgotten. Let us ensure that their light may always shine.

GIFTS FOR UNDER PRIVILEGED CHILDREN FIRST STEP

is a program of Chester County for under privileged/handicapped children. For many years our Chapter has collected gifts for them. We will do so again this year, at our December 5th meeting & December 8th World Wide Candle Lighting Service (Children's Memorial Day) Program. The children are between the ages of 2 and 6. Both clothing and toys are welcome gifts. It is very rewarding to remember your child, by showing love to these children. Please add a tag that states suggested age and sex. You may sign it, "from your friend", or your child or sibling's name. This may be the only gift the child will receive. We appreciate your participation in this worthy cause

CELEBRATING THANKSGIVING WHILE GRIEVING

For many of us, fall means the time of year to be in awe of all the beautiful colors of nature, and to give thanks for our many blessings. When our child or sibling dies, our eyes still see nature's beauty, but our hearts are in too much pain to feel, appreciate, or enjoy anything. The Thanksgiving holiday seems almost unacceptable to many newly bereaved. It is very difficult to give thanks, when one of our greatest blessings has been taken from us, and the gut-wrenching pain is with us every moment.

We now know how precious the gift of life is. We are more appreciative of our surviving family and find the dreaded anticipation of not having our whole family together for our traditional Thanksgiving adds to our grief.

This is not a time to shelter others from our pain. Not being honest can give false messages, and confuses others who want to help us. Friends and extended family members frequently think they know what is always best for us. Their advice may only be best for them, by easing their pain and pretending you are capable of handling more than you can.

It is important to include immediate family members in your holiday planning. Don't try to read their minds. You are showing respect and acknowledging their pain by getting their input. They, too, have apprehensions of up coming holidays, and need to have open verbal communication.

If you plan to be with friends or extended family, it may be wise to give advance notice that you may not be able to "keep it together". If you plan to have people in, try to let others help you prepare the dinner. You may want to deviate from traditions. Only you can decide what is best for you.

Ask friends to accept your decision. We kept all our traditions, but that may not be best for you. We still had our surviving children at home, and it seemed important to hold to our seasonal celebrations.

Even though it is difficult to count blessings, we need to communicate with our feelings. Family, friends, and relationships are always at the top of our list of things to be thankful for. Next came material things, which now seem so trivial, and not even worth enumerating. "Things" don't belong on the same page anymore. Most of us have learned a new meaning about life. What a waste it would be if we endured all this pain and agony, and did not become a more caring person. We also have a new understanding of the word "Compassion", and have learned to reach out to those who need us.

We should not minimize our pain. It often prevents us from counting our blessings, and that is very normal during our early grief. The intense pain blocks out everything. We should feel no guilt for having normal human reactions. Allow yourselves to grieve and cry, it is very healing.

There are no shortcuts to get through our grief. But, it will get softer, and tolerable, and we learn how to handle the holidays. I could not believe this in my fresh grief. I have healed more than I ever thought possible. All memories were so painful. One of the things I am most thankful for is that I can now remember beautiful times with Doug, without having intense pain. I feel and hope you will also have this blessing one day. God Bless,

Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge

Cry when you want to: Laugh when you can.

OUR CHILDREN & SIBLINGS LOVED, SADLY MISSED AND REMEMBERED

Each month some of us must face those special, but difficult days of birthdays and anniversaries. This month we ask your thoughts and prayers for the parents, siblings, relatives of the following children.

We will no longer list the birth and death years of deceased persons in our newsletter. We have concerns this information could be misused, and result in an adversity for the families.

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Blake Barbie - son - **Chad Blake** - 11/19

Victoria Bayle - son - **Bobby D Bayle III** - 10/2

Julie Beasley - son - **Aaron** - 11/5

Stephen & Barbara Billings - daughter - **Laura Elizabeth** - 11/26

Jacqueline Bonney - daughter - **Genevieve** - 11/5

Scott & Gail Campbell - daughter - **Chelsea** - 11/4

Joyce Caperilla - daughter - **Jennifer** - 11/22

Libby Cavallaro - sister - **Theresa** - 11/19

Loreta & Ken Cericola - son - **Anthony Cericola** - 11/10

Becky & Frank Clark - daughter - **Lisa** - 11/25

Thomas & Janet Cleary - son - **Ryan** - 11/14

Kathy Concannon - daughter - **Tracey** - 11/9

Lisa & David Dibello - son - **Joey** - 11/13/2012

Rochena & Pat Fatale - son - **Mark Longan** - 11/15

Abigail Figueroa - son - **Jose C Figueroa** - 11/11

JoAnne Forman - son - **H. Scott Hartman, Jr.** - 11/12

Sharon & Francis Gailey - daughter - **Danielle Marie** - 7/14

Linda & Steven Gilbert - daughter - **Pamela Gilbert** - 11/6

Elizabeth Haney - son - **Christian** - 11/28

Othell & William Heaney - son - **Roger Heaney** - 11/22

Carl & Catherine Helwig - son - **Michael Helwig** - 11/24

Jacob & Rachel Himmelstein - son - **Benjamin** 11/19

Cynthia Hornyak - daughter - **Meredith** - 11/27

hazel Hurley - son - **Michael** - 11/10

Vern & Joyce Kaiser - son - **Brian** - 11/2

Elida Kauffman - son - **Daniel** - 11/26

John & Eileen Kostic - son - **John E** - 11/18

Karen Lapera - son - **Michael** - 11/26

Julie Lauderback - son - **Donovan Lauderback** - 11/20

Marlene & Jerry Lener - - **Daniel** - 11/16

Susan & Richard Leoni/Cutler - son - **Kevin** - 11/6

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES CONT'D

Ed & Linda Lincul - son - Matthew - 11/27
Bonnie Macdonald - son - R, Scott Geddes - 11/28
Jennifer & Michael Magee - sister - Jacqueline Ann Rogers - 11/7
Pete Mihalek - son - Andy - 11/21
Alexandra Milas - daughter - Nicole Penelope Wiseley - 11/5
Thelma Miller - son - Lowell Bruce Miller - 2/23
Audrey Morasco - son - Christopher Morasco - 12/27
Kelly & Hank Murray - son - john murray - 11/22
Rose & Mike Orlando - son - Michael - 11/21
Sheldon & Joan Plam - son - Michael Tobiah Plam - 11/7
Tony & Laurene Quercetti - daughter - Christine L. 11/7
Gina & Brian Richardson - son - Nicholas 11/14
Ruth Richardson - grandson - Nicholas Richardson - 11/14
Skipp & Kathy Robinson - daughter - Carrie Robinson - 11/16
Mike & Diane Rogers - daughter - Jacqueline Ann Rogers - 11/7
Donald & Mary Rose - daughter - Marjorie Rose-Cotteta - 11/24
Cathy Siciliano - son - Anthony - 11/24
Robert & Sigrid Snow - son - Barry Snow - 4/28
Jen & Alex Soutos - daughter - Alexi - 11/22
Harry & Merrily Spiess - son - F. Ryan Spiess - 11/29
Judy Tomarelli - son - Daniel Robert Tomarelli - 8/10
Esperanza & Libardo Toro - daughter - Maria Eugenia Toro - 11/3
Steven Tucker - son - Patrick Ryan - 8/18
Lynn & Tim Tumminello - daughter - Natalie - 11/12
Mary Walker - daughter - Susan - 11/19
Linda Weaver - son - Damon Weaver - 3/18
Bill & Patti Whitehead - daughter - Maria - 11/1

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Gloria Bello - son - Joseph - 11/24
Marbeth Blocklinger - grandson - Parker - 10/14
Cindy Brickley - mother - Timothy - 11/14
Jackie & Steve Brown - son - Doug Brown - 11/28
Sally Cahill - grandson - Tim - 11/14
Terry & Sam Capizzi - son - sammy - 11/21
Catherine Chan - son - Chanlan Lee - 11/27

Liliana Couchara - friend - **Christian** - 11/22
Franklin & Patricia Fox - daughter - **Christen Fox,-** 11/2
Antoinette & John DiDonato - son - **Kenneth (Kenny)** - 12/15
JoAnne Forman - son - **H. Scott Hartman, Jr.** - 11/21
Sharon & Francis Gailey - daughter - **Danielle Marie Gailey** - 11/7
Angela Giannantonio - son - **Anthony** - 11/11
Diane Goldberg - nephew - **Sammy** - 11/21
Charlotte and Michael Gormish - brother - **Douglas Moyer** - 11/9
Melissa Greco - daughter - **Gabrielle** - 11/11
Enid M. Irizarry - daughter - **Lisette M. Molina** - 11/16
Tash Jackson - cousin - **Peter Simmons Jr** - 11/20
Vern & Joyce Kaiser - son - **Brian** - 11/9
Luann Kalamon - son - **Adam Michael** - 11/12
Sandi Kensicki - sister - **Rose** - 11/7
Barbara Kirk - son - **Eric** - 11/29
John & Eileen Kostic - son - **John E** - 11/29
Rhoda & Melvin Kreiner - daughter - **Anna Kreiner** - 11/19
Joanne & Thomas Lennen - son - **Scott C. Lennen** - 11/14
Dan Logan - daughter - **Joanie** - 11/15
Tracy Lukens - son - **Parker** - 10/14
Mary & Bob Matcovich - son - **Christian** - 11/22
Eileen & Chris McKeown - son - **Eric** - 11/16
Thelma Miller - son - **Lowell Bruce Miller** - 5/14
Joanne Morasco - son - **Robert** - 11/4
Anthony & Mary Morrell - son - **Andrew Michael** - 11/28
David & Donna Morrell - son - **Matthew Morrell** - 11/9
Fred & Marilyn Mountjoy - daughter - **Barilyn** - 10/3
Betsy Oakes - son - **Bruce Schaeffer** - 11/19
Carol & Dennis O'Connor - brother - **Jack Coladonato** - 7/14
Patricia Peraino - brother - **Anthony** - 11/11
Robert & Barbara Pontician - son - **Rob Pontician** - 11/28
Roy Redman - daughter - **Linda Inez Redman** - 10/22
Debbie Repas - daughter - **Stacy Lynn** - 11/26
Daune Ring - daughter - **Chloe** - 11/14
Lois Robinson - son - **Randy** - 11/5
Ilene & Sy Rockower - daughter - **Amy Rockower** - 11/22
Andrea Rohloff - son - **Jim** - 11/14
Edie Smith - son - **John Seddon "Sed" Wilson** - 11/15
Elaine & Tim Thomas - son - **Seth Peterson** - 11/21
Judy Tomarelli - son - **Daniel Robert Tomarelli** - 12/19

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS CONT'D

Marilyn Toole - son - **Ted Toole** - 11/3

Jack, Bobbie and Ross Trotter - daughter/sister - **Megan** - 11/25

Weldon & Marie Tyson - son - **Ronald C. Stewart** - 11/12

Harry & Lynne Urian - son - **Mike** - 11/14

Linda Weaver - son - **Damon Weaver** - 11/21



A SIBLING SPEAKS OUT

What happens to the children when a Brother or sister dies? In some ways it is a very different experience from that which parents go through, while in others it is very much the same. Part of the reason for the difference is that the child who has died has a unique relationship with each family member. Part of the reason for the similarity is that all have suffered a loss.

One of the strongest desires expressed by siblings is that they are much more likely to want to return to a normal routine. They want to return to school fairly quickly and to go out with their friends. They want their parents to stop crying, not because they don't care but because they do care and want to see the hurt stop. Just because a child wants to go to a movie doesn't mean he isn't grieving. I think that children are much less exposed to socially "appropriate" behavior after someone has died and may do things that do not fit into an "appropriate" role.

Another strong feeling I see is that of guilt. As much as parents know about their children, there are some things they will never know. A child's private thoughts, or an exchange between children, may never come to the parents attention. The source of child's guilt is frequently the result of an argument, a hastily shouted "drop dead," or a similar fleeting thought. These incidents come back to haunt children, as though one such incident had something to do with the death.

There are a few more concerns that may develop. One is how to take over for the dead child--for example, the household chores that were always done by him or her, but that now have to be done by someone else. Related to this concern is a situation in which a child always shared a particular activity simply because the sibling did it too. After the death, the surviving sibling may feel compelled to continue the activity, because to give it up would be to take away a reminder of the dead sibling. Another concern is that whatever happened to the brother or sister may happen to the survivor. This is particularly acute if the sibling who died was older. As the child approaches the age of the sibling when he or she died, a feeling of anxiety may develop. Many children realize this fear to be groundless, but find themselves wondering if they will survive. Consequently, birthdays are often occasions with unexpressed conflicts.

Children also share some of their parents' feelings: the loneliness, the looking for comfort, the feeling that no one else really knows what they're going through. They also share unanswerable questions: "If I could have . . ." and "What if...?"

A child's life is changed forever when a brother or sister dies. If I could advise parents, it would be to say, "Children do not grieve the same way as parents do because of different relationships. Keeping these differences leaving, don't leave anything to chance; don't assume anything. Making sure you and your children are aware of each other's feelings will mean less confusion, less tension, more sharing, and more growing together as a family.

Julie Peterson TCF, Pawtucket, RI

Newsletter Format Change was a wishful thinking change. When I got the quote from the printer I quickly changed my mind. Charges would have been well over \$100 more to make that change.

MY FIRST FIVE YEARS AS AN ONLY CHILD

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I've aged thirty years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I've accomplished the many things of a typical young adult – learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career.

Every one of my accomplishments have been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children, or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews.

The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I've learned to accept that he's not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day. My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends.

The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changed to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I'm angry about all of the things that we've missed and all of the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years,

I've been forced to grow up too fast. I've been forced into a new outlook on life. I've felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. That person is locked away and is gone forever. Maybe I'm a better person now because of what I've been through. Five years ago I never thought I'd survive, but I'm still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I've made it this far.

Kristina Steiner TCF - Staten Island, NY

MY BUDDY DAMON AND ME

My buddy Damon is not here anymore,
but I do care and love him very much.

He is always in my heart, mind and soul
for that is how I feel about my buddy Damon.
Damon was always a very courageous person
for what he had to endure, living with illnesses
for many, many years until his last bit of breath.

He loved to run away from us, so we had to run to catch him.
God helped us to be calm, so we could deal with the stress of his pain.

My buddy Damon was very much loved by his family and
friends and he was an apple of my delight.

My buddy Damon always hugged me and called me Mommy Linda,
which touched me very dearly.

Damon will be with me always and God will always be by my side.

God protect my buddy Damon from all the evil around here,
forevermore eternally.

Linda Weaver TCF Valley Forge

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR

Every time that I am in a group of bereaved parents, I hear people say things like, "I wish my child hadn't died" or "I wish I had him back." That wish, unfortunately, can never come true.

The other wish I hear is, "I wish my friends (or church, or neighbors, or relatives) understood what I am going through and were more supportive." This is a wish that has some possibility of coming true if we are able to be honest and assertive with the people around us. What do we wish others understood about the loss of our child? Here is a partial list of such wishes:

1. I wish you would not be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was important and I need to hear his name.
2. If I cry or get emotional if we talk about my child. I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me; the fact that my child died has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry and I thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.
3. I wish you wouldn't "kill" my child again by removing from your home his pictures, artwork, or other remembrances.
4. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn't think that if I have a good day my grief is all over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.
5. I wish you knew that the death of a child is different from other losses and must be viewed separately. It is the ultimate tragedy and I wish you wouldn't compare it to your loss of a parent, a spouse, or a pet.
6. Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me.
7. I wish you knew that all of the "crazy" grief reactions I am having are in fact very normal. Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and the questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected following the death of a child.
8. I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for us. As with alcoholics, I will never be "cured" or a "former bereaved parent", but will forevermore be a "recovering bereaved parent".
9. I wish you understood the physical reactions to grief. I may gain weight or lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all, develop a host of illnesses and be accident prone, all of which may be related to my grief.
10. Our child's birthday, the anniversary of his death, and holidays are terrible times for us. I wish you could tell us that you are thinking about our child on these days, and if we get quiet and withdrawn, just know that we are thinking about our child and don't try to coerce us into being cheerful.
11. It is normal and good that most of us reexamine our faith, values, and beliefs after losing a child. We will question things we have been taught all our lives and hopefully come to some new understanding with our God. I wish that you would let me tangle with my religion without making me feel guilty.
12. I wish you wouldn't offer me drinks or drugs. These are just temporary crutches and the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have to hurt before I can heal.

Instead of sitting around and waiting for our wishes to come true, we have an obligation to teach people some of the things we have learned about our grief. We can teach these lessons with great kindness, believing that people have good intentions and want to do what is right, but just don't know what to do with us.

Do you remember how Pavlov, the famous psychologist, rewarded his dogs for doing the right thing? Their behavior repeated! If a neighbor sends a plate of cookies on the day of your child's birth, tell her how much you appreciated her remembering your child. If a relative jots a note in a Christmas card and says he is thinking about you during this difficult time, write back and thank him for acknowledging your pain. If by accident a friend mentions your child's name and it makes you cry, you may not be able to thank them at the time, but you can tell them later how important it is to talk about your child. Whether one of your wishes is fulfilled by accident or through great sensitivity, reward others for what they have done for you. Chances are good that they will repeat these kindnesses on other occasions and perhaps your wish of having more understanding friend and relative will come true.

Elaine Grier, Philip's Mom, Atlanta Chapter

BEYOND SURVIVING

Hundreds of books have been written about loss and grief. Few have addressed the aftermath of suicide for survivors. Here again, there are no answers; only suggestions from those who have lived through and beyond the event. I've compiled their thoughts.

- 1 Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with "why" it happened until you no longer need to know "why", or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings but all your feelings are normal.
4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy, - you are in mourning.
5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself.
6. You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on those thoughts.
8. Remember to take one moment or one day at a time.
9. Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
10. Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
11. Give yourself time to heal.
12. Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
13. Expect setbacks. Don't panic if emotions return like a tidal wave. You may only be experiencing a remnant of grief; an unfinished piece.
14. Try to put off major decisions.
15. Give yourself permission to get professional help.
16. Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
17. Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
18. Set your own limits and learn to say no.
19. Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
20. Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as The Compassionate Friends or Survivors of Suicide Groups. If not, ask a professional to help start one.
21. Call on your personal faith to help you through.
22. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, i.e. - headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, etc.
23. The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
24. Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go.
25. Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and go beyond just surviving...



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***A bereavement organization
 For parents, siblings and families
 We offer friendship, love and understanding
 We talk, we listen, we share, we care.***



The Compassionate Friends 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.