



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



July/August, 2020

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER
Stewart Levett - Acting

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

SC MEMBER
Jen Sutton
Son, Austin L. Sutton

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER HELP - 719-344-3216

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS
STEWART & LETA LEVETT - 719-531-5488 *

LEUKEMIA
JANE & STEVE GABRIEL - 719-282-1924 *

ADULT CHILD / SUDDEN DEATH
CHAEAL CHRISTIANSON - 719-687-6688 *

SUICIDE
JEN SUTTON - 719-354-0057 *

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT
RAYE WILSON - 303-814-9478

*Steering Committee

Welcome

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.

Our support group is currently meeting on the 3rd **Friday** of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are open to the parents, grandparents and older siblings of your loved one. We are meeting at the Universal Kempo Karate School located at 410K South 8th Street, directly behind the Taco Express.

Due to our current pandemic situation, all guests will be required to fill out a Covid-19 questionnaire and have their temperature taken. Masks will be required upon entering but may then be removed once you are seated. We ask that no food be brought into the school but individual, non-alcoholic drinks will be allowed.

We understand your pain; won't you let us help you through your grief?





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

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.

\$25 up to \$50 - A picture, if available, and dedication to be listed in the newsletter.

\$0 up to \$25 - A Love Gift acknowledgement. All 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!



Chaplain Eugene Steinkirchner
Love Gift Donation - CSPD

Michaela Christianson
in memory of Damon Vincent Christianson

Stewart & Leta Levett
in loving memory of Aaron Paul Levett

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>

www.compassionatefriends.org

National - www.compassionatefriends.org



Welcome New Friends.

Jeanette Glusko - Brother, Anthony Glusko

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.



STATUS OF OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our monthly support group is currently meeting on the 3rd **Friday** of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are open to the parents, grandparents and older siblings of your loved one. **We are meeting at the Universal Kempo Karate School located at 410K South 8th Street, directly behind the Taco Express.**

Due to our current pandemic situation, all guests will be required to fill out a Covid-19 questionnaire and have their temperature taken. Masks will be required upon entering but may then be removed once you are seated. We ask that no food be brought into the school but individual, non-alcoholic drinks will be allowed.

We believe we have enough space and chairs to accommodate all who wish to attend but we do ask that you acknowledge your desire to attend by sending us a request at pikespeaktcf@gmail.com.

Last months meeting was attended by ten members, eight regular members and two new attendees. Won't you join us this month? Mark your calendars for Friday, August 21st at 7:00 p.m.

The Steering Committee met this week to discuss the challenges presented by the current state of the Corona Virus. Masks or no masks? Social distancing is a requirement and the logistics of where to hold our meetings until the state and the church lift or loosen the guidelines for gathering present its fair share of problems.

It is for these reasons as well as many other concerns about how to effectively plan and execute, that we have decided to cancel our annual August Balloon Launch for our children in addition to our biggest event, the 2020 Candlelight Service in December.

Both events have always been a way for all of us to gather and celebrate our children who have passed through poetry, readings, music and pictures. We regret the cancellation but our main concern is to keep everyone as safe as possible including the volunteers who spend so many hours planning and organizing these events.

Over the next several months we will publish ways in which you can alternatively honor the memory of your child and will provide links to where you can log a tribute to be posted by The Compassionate Friends national site to be run during the 24 hour Candlelight vigil. Thank you for understanding, be safe!



REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAY

Name	Birthday	Compassionate Friend
Charlie Josh Jones	Jul 1	Sue Jones
Ryan Thompson	Jul 1	Yvette & Bob Thompson
Charlie Josh Jones	Jul 1	Angie Jones
Steven Bondurant	Jul 1	Karen Bondurant
Sean Michael Benjamin	Jul 1	Kathy Benjamin
Timothy Scott Williams	Jul 3	Lea Blanc
Karen Sue Crawford	Jul 4	Joy Andrews
Sean Thompson	Jul 5	Rick Korcsog/Frankie Thompson
Kyle Joe Manning	Jul 7	Carol & Don Manning
Blake Smith	Jul 8	Brian Smith
Daniel Foreman	Jul 8	Jan Foreman
Sam Blew	Jul 9	Bryan & Jennifer Blew
Anthony James "Tony" Pisor	Jul 10	Cynthia Pisor-Zapel
Pearl Marion Irby	Jul 11	Haley & Michael Irby
Lora Lee	Jul 11	Kathy Hollaway
Nathan Luther Spangenberg	Jul 12	Lois Spangenberg
Bruce White	Jul 12	Gordon White
Jack Lincoln Farrell	Jul 13	Pamela Welch
Cristoval Ornelas	Jul 13	Annette & Chris Ornelas
Travis Holappa	Jul 14	Kim & Terry Packa
Eli Witcher	Jul 16	Phyllis Lallier
Everly Jacobs	Jul 18	Raelyn Jacobs
Cris Cruz	Jul 19	Henrietta Madrid
Tiffany Maxwell	Jul 20	Diane Maxwell
Ryan Sayers	Jul 20	Tom & Kate Sayers
Brian Patrick Adair	Jul 21	Duane & Mary Adair
Justin William Winner	Jul 21	Dale & Rosanne Winner
Arthur Lipphardt Jr	Jul 23	Art & Chris Lipphardt
Amanda Stocchero	Jul 24	Sandy Stocchero
Craig Matthews	Jul 24	Cathy Genato
Raven Guinevere Hosmer	Jul 24	Terra Tice
Alexander Pegler	Jul 26	Eric & Lisa Pegler
Anadelia Vega	Jul 27	Dale Vega
Mallory Jane Hooper	Jul 28	Bill & Beth Hooper
Michael Williams Greist	Jul 28	Judy Greist
Scott Michael Gerwatowski	Jul 28	Linda Gerwatowski
Michelle Howie	Jul 31	Annette Howie
Eric Johnson	Aug 1	Gary Johnson
Lauren Hoover	Aug 1	Jill & Banty Hoover
Eugene Harris, Jr.	Aug 2	Gene Harris
Veronika Olivia Baca	Aug 2	Sharon Baca
Emma Renee Younger	Aug 2	Adam & Mindy Younger



REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAY

Name	Birthday	Compassionate Friend
Aaron Paul Levett	Aug 2	Stewart & Leta Levett
Genevieve Sucharski	Aug 2	Mark and Karen Sucharski
Eugene Harris, Jr.	Aug 2	Stacey Burciago, Tonia Paguyo
Nicholas Clare Cousineau	Aug 3	George & Chris Cousineau
Matthew John McCallister	Aug 4	Steve & Carol McCallister
James Russell Kempa	Aug 4	Gayle Kempa
Rebekah Cano Moore	Aug 6	Janis Cano
Graham Stingley	Aug 7	Mary Winter-Stingley
Stella Elliott	Aug 8	Donna Elliott
Kali Albern	Aug 9	Sherri Albern
Nicholas Ryan Nelson	Aug 10	Marley Nelson Rhoad
Clayton Neal Brehm	Aug 10	Ramona Atkinson
Kimberly Denise Patterson	Aug 11	Sigrid Patterson
Lisa Marie O'Briant	Aug 11	Gary & Mary O'Briant
Eric Paul Deming	Aug 12	Denise Deming
Michael Williams, Jr.	Aug 13	Carmen Randall
Christopher Calegar	Aug 15	Kevin & Linda Calegar
Zack Orr	Aug 16	Dave & Sharon Orr
Gina Marie Geffre	Aug 16	Joann Jahraus
Jackson Ahrold	Aug 16	Gretchen, Doug & Tina Blenkarn
Adam Czyz	Aug 17	Robyn Czyz
Santiago Ruiz	Aug 17	Miriam Ruiz
Dakota Willmann	Aug 20	Erin Welch
Suzanne Bethany Thomas	Aug 20	Arnie & Mary Thomas
Brandon Naymik	Aug 20	Megan Riley
James Wieszorek	Aug 21	Mary Beringer
Susanna Jeanette Scruggs	Aug 21	Patricia Beard
Mia Allyson Gardiner	Aug 22	Peri Gardiner
Mark Anthony Hickman	Aug 22	Aundria & Dennis Casey
Abigail Ruth Smelser	Aug 23	Robin Myers
JT Tills	Aug 24	Sarah Gleeson
Kalli Rose James	Aug 24	Lindsey James
Lance Alan Rigby	Aug 25	Deborah Rigby
Sayge Frisco	Aug 26	Renai Frisco
Patrick Casey Hildebrand	Aug 26	Dr. Jan and Judi Hildebrand
Sheldon Pasca	Aug 26	Norma Watkins
Jake Bair	Aug 26	Ginger Bair
Mary Hope Burton	Aug 27	Jim & Betty Burton
Kevin Hardman	Aug 28	Dianne McLaughlin
Matthew Medina	Aug 29	Vicki Schwindt
Ryan Pappas	Aug 29	Susan Pappas
Robert Yankosky	Aug 30	Dave & Lucy Klos
Nolan Edward Stites	Aug 31	Richard & Marilyn Stites



REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR ANNIVERSARY

Name	Age	Anniversary	Compassionate Friend
Kyleigh Peltzer	1 year	Jul 2	Ashleigh Peltzer
Damon Vincent	33 years	Jul 3	Chaela Christianson
Heidi Susanne Wolfe	20 years	Jul 3	David & Karen Wolfe
Adam Roy Hodges	5 years	Jul 4	JoAnn Ewing
Ramon E.G. Lucero	26 years	Jul 5	Diana & Kimber Michael
Devin John Seifert	21 years	Jul 5	Steve & Debbie Seifert
Raven Guinevere Hosmer	32 years	Jul 5	Terra Tice
Nicole Megan Yagi	9 years	Jul 5	Jackie & Dennis Yagi
Sebastian Salkind	39 years	Jul 6	Skye Aubrey (c/o Shay)
Jay Aguanno	19 years	Jul 7	Jean Aguanno
Kaitlin Bartlett	17 years	Jul 8	Kim Bartlett
Andrew Aguilar	24 years	Jul 9	Delecia (Dee) Brooks
Shannon Diane McMahon	16 years	Jul 9	Robert & Jeanette McMahon
Brooke Hromadka	32 years	Jul 10	J.D. Farmer
Pearl Marion Irby	1 day	Jul 11	Haley & Michael Irby
Jack C. Jefferson	5 years	Jul 11	John & Dena Jefferson
Abigail Ruth Smelser	23 years	Jul 11	Robin Myers
Chance Tyler Nichols	17 years	Jul 11	Charlie Nichols
Cristoval Ornelas	1 day	Jul 13	Annette & Chris Ornelas
Christopher Skaggs	15 years	Jul 13	Ernest & Tanya Skaggs
Jack Lincoln Farrell	1 day	Jul 13	Pamela Welch
Eric Paul Deming	27 years	Jul 14	Denise Deming
Zachary Dean Glenn	3 years	Jul 14	Kristin & Larry Glenn
Avery Keirse	2 months	Jul 14	Carissa Keirse
Kristopher Lohrmeyer	17 years	Jul 16	Dan & Lori Lohrmeyer
Eli Witcher	2 days	Jul 17	Phyllis Lallier
Blake Smith	1 year	Jul 17	Brian Smith
Jeanne Burroughs Widmar	33 years	Jul 18	Arlene & Charles Burroughs
Malik Boykins	12 years	Jul 18	Matisa Dunkley
Matthew Alan Haywood	22 years	Jul 18	Roger Haywood
Roy Polhemus		Jul 18	Kathleen Landry, Edward Pohlemus
David Scott Mueller	19 years	Jul 19	Sandy Eversole
Ryan Rickman	11 years	Jul 19	Jean Rickman Place
Amanda Stocchero	15 years	Jul 19	Sandy Stocchero
Michael Benjamin Decker	18 years	Jul 20	Mary & Jerry Decker
Robert "Bobby" Slaughter	20 years	Jul 20	Robert Slaughter
Veronika Olivia Baca	1 year	Jul 22	Sharon Baca
Courtney Marie Becker	27 years	Jul 22	Joseph Becker
Travis Grimmer	29 years	Jul 23	Mary Lou Grimmer
Cathleen Bartlett Maxwell	6 years	Jul 24	Dick & Marty Maxwell
Travis Holappa	25 years	Jul 25	Kim & Terry Packa
Kari Ann Kirt	15 years	Jul 26	Lon and Andrea Kirt
Cyan Pratt	20 years	Jul 27	Stanley Pratt
Nicholas Bettke	22 years	Jul 28	Bruce Bettke
Christie Fike	32 years	Jul 28	Shirley & Dan Emerson
Benjamin Stewart Easton	22 years	Jul 28	Susan Stewart
Nathan Gentry	7 years	Jul 29	Susan Gentry
Haley Yarbrough	23 years	Jul 29	Andrea Yarbrough
Mike Petersen	20 years	Jul 30	Doug & Shelli Petersen
Jimmy Schmidt	13 years	Jul 30	Jim & Laurie Schmidt
Ian Steele	27 years	Jul 30	Donna Vezakis
Jonathan Steven Gabriel	5 years	Jul 31	Steve & Jane Gabriel



REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR ANNIVERSARY

Name	Age	Anniversary	Compassionate Friend
Tyrone Elliott Bautista	19 years	Aug 1	Rosemary Devney
Jason Bradford Pfeif	18 years	Aug 1	Chris and Brad Pfeif
Joey Urbanowicz	31 years	Aug 4	Joe Urbanowicz
Chelsey Ann Kear	15 years	Aug 5	Tami Kear
Thomas Rosenkranz	20 years	Aug 5	Carolyn Kochis
Jared Todd LeFevre	34 years	Aug 5	Susan Reed
Jessica Rae McKenna-Simmons	33 years	Aug 6	Debbie McKenna
Kevin Hardman	21 years	Aug 6	Dianne McLaughlin
Sam Skaggs	10 years	Aug 7	Jennifer Skaggs
Keith Andrew Barrett	24 years	Aug 9	Ree Barrett
Jake Bair	19 years	Aug 12	Ginger Bair
Brent Eads	20 years	Aug 12	Lucy Butcher
Kali Albern	20 years	Aug 15	Sherri Albern
Jake Matthew	18 years	Aug 15	Malcolm Matthew
Laura Dean	30 years	Aug 16	Barbara Dean
Andrew Paul Weaver	20 years	Aug 17	Valerie Lightbody
Nikolas Chunn	5 years	Aug 18	Monica Chunn
Derrick Shane Moore	11 years	Aug 20	Ray & Deanna Moore
Ryan Colgrove	30 years	Aug 21	Theresia Colgrove
Nathaniel Hughes	18 years	Aug 21	Jim Hughes
Scott Martinson	6 years	Aug 21	JoAnn Martinson
Michael Ramirez	59 years	Aug 22	Jennie Ramirez
Clayton Champion	29 years	Aug 22	Jessie & Phyllis Roark
Jose N. Camacho	9 years	Aug 24	William & Veronica Camacho
Addie Marie Vande Stouwe	23 years	Aug 25	Shawn Roberson
Sayge Frisco	1 day	Aug 26	Renai Frisco
Jake Holm	19 years	Aug 27	Eric & Kalyne Holm
Nolan Edward Stites	19 years	Aug 29	Richard & Marilyn Stites



Aaron Paul Levett August 2, 1979 ~ October 18, 2005

You were our pride and joy, loved by so many and certainly missed by all. It's now been 15 years but it's as if it were yesterday.

Happy 41st birthday!

Love Mom & Dad



GRIEVING THE DEATH OF OUR CHILD DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The world is in the grip of the coronavirus pandemic. For some of us, the reality has come too close to home. If your child has died during this time of crisis and social distancing, we offer our heartfelt condolences. The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national charity whose members have experienced the loss of a child, of any age and in any circumstances. We stand with you in compassion and solidarity.

When a child dies suddenly, the shock and disbelief we suffer as parents is overwhelming. Whatever the cause of our child's death — whether it was due to Covid-19 or for any other reason — if it has not been possible for us to be at their side, then our grief might be made even more intense. We might have had no opportunity to express our love and care in person, to be with them and to hold them in their last moments. Not being able to say 'goodbye' in the way we would wish might make us feel frustrated about the present restrictions regarding social distancing and travel. Current limitations do not even allow us to hold a funeral in the normal way.

In this short leaflet we will look at surviving the pain and grief caused by the death of a child, and the support that TCF can offer you. This is written from our perspectives and experiences as bereaved parents. (This leaflet is addressed primarily to parents, but could also be relevant to other close family members, including grandparents and adult siblings.)

The turmoil caused by sudden death

Shock is often the body's first response to news of sudden death. Everything seems surreal; we begin to operate on auto-pilot because normal emotions and responses are paralyzed. As we begin to comprehend what has happened, we experience a bewildering array of strong emotions. We might be in turmoil. Our imagination might run riot as we try to picture the care our child was given and how they suffered, particularly if they died without anyone they knew at their side. Although what happened is certainly not our fault and there is nothing we could have done, we might still blame ourselves, feeling as though we failed in our parental role of protecting, nurturing and making things right.

We might resent the idea that our child appears to be one of those oft-quoted statistics, when in reality they are so much more. Our child was the baby who we nursed; the toddler who walked and talked; the child who played. Depending on their age, they were the teenager or the young adult, living a full life. They were unique, with their own interests, personality and talents. They had their likes and dislikes in music, food and fashion. They had dreams and expectations, and we too had our hopes of how their life would unfold. The crushing of these hopes brings deep heartache.

It is not surprising in these circumstances to find ourselves deeply sad, mournful, lacking concentration, exhausted, despairing, confused or angry — or very likely a combination of all these. Such grief can bring with it an overwhelming sense of powerlessness. If we are a person of faith, we may be severely tested. If we have surviving children or other close family members, we may become gripped with worries about their welfare. There is no escaping information about coronavirus at this time; constant updates can keep us in a state of agitation. News of potential treatments or of those who have recovered may lead us to feel resentment; why couldn't that good news have been regarding our child? It may be difficult to see a way forward for ourselves.

Our normal life has already been interrupted by social and travel restrictions. Grieving at this time of social separation means that our families or close friends whom we might have expected to rally around us are not available in the same way. In particular, if we are not living with a partner, we might feel desperately alone in our grief.

If any of the above applies to you, then our message is: **you are not alone**. We can assure you from our collective experience, as fellow bereaved parents, that there are ways to cope with the acute agony of grief. The immediate pain is raw; in time it becomes more manageable. We hope you will find the following helpful.

It is possible to survive and live with our loss

As parents, we are accustomed to caring for others. At this moment, we also need to care for ourselves. Warm, sweetened drinks are helpful for shock. If we cannot face a full meal, we could try small snacks. A little fresh air and exercise will do us good, even if this is limited to a garden, balcony or next to an open window.

Finding an outlet for our thoughts and feelings is essential. Reaching out to close friends or family members via the phone, WhatsApp, FaceTime or other digital means is not as good as having them in the same room with us, but can be better than nothing.

Facing the pain of grief takes courage. We need to talk about our child's life and the circumstances of their death. There are good memories to be shared, although at first the pain of their passing, the devastation of unfulfilled dreams and shattered hopes may fill our thoughts. Speaking with other bereaved parents, either individually or in a support group, can be very helpful in this regard. It really helps to know that however dreadful this situation is, we do not have to suffer on our own.

Writing can be a useful and creative outlet for our conflicting and confusing emotions; a safe way of expressing ourselves. It does not matter whether we share our writings or they remain private.



~Continued from previous page~

Physical exercise, although limited during the current restrictions, can also be a safe outlet for painful emotions. It can provide focus and control, even if only while we are doing it. Gentle exercise such as yoga can be meditative and aid relaxation, whilst vigorous exercise can be a way to express anger and leave us feeling calmer afterwards. If necessary, we can exercise indoors.

Above all, we should be kind to ourselves. This means not only taking physical care, but also allowing ourselves time and space to grieve. We will need to face our grief if we want to survive it. This includes allowing ourselves to cry, if we wish; expressing our emotions loudly, if we wish; or sitting in quietness, if that is what we prefer.

Having patience with ourselves is one of the most important elements of being kind to ourselves. We should not feel obligated to 'keep busy' or 'pull ourselves together' when our hearts are breaking. This is probably the greatest tragedy we have faced in our entire lives. Eventually we will find our feet in life again, but there is no timescale for this.

Adjusting to the painful reality of life without our child

Finding ways of managing our daily lives in light of our child's absence is a real challenge for many of us. It is difficult to watch the world continue as usual, whilst we are missing our child and our family is incomplete. If we have other caring or work responsibilities, we may need to force ourselves to get up each day. For those without such obligations, finding any motivation can be more of a challenge. It is important not to put any undue pressures on ourselves and to try to take each day as it comes.

For many parents, it is important to do things that help keep our child's memory alive. This could be from something simple such as sorting out photos or lighting a candle, to more elaborate activities such as creating a memorial website or replanting a corner of the garden in their memory. This type of activity can help us slowly adjust to the reality of our loss and our changed relationship of memory with our child. There are many ideas for activities in the TCF *Handbook of Ideas for Remembering our Child*. You can download it free of charge here: www.tcf.org.uk/rememberinghandbook

We will need to be creative and adaptable in our grieving. For instance, if it has not been possible for us to attend our child's funeral, and/or if the funeral was not all that we wanted it to be, we could plan a memorial service for when restrictions are lifted. Alternatively, we could organize some type of digital 'social media' memorial, where friends and family could be invited to contribute pictures or comments.

If we have a partner or other family members living at home, or if we are in close contact with others, we may find that they are expressing their grief differently to us. Each person's grief is unique, and there are no right or wrong ways to grieve. However, this could give rise to some tensions between us. It is worthwhile communicating our feelings when possible.

Although we can learn from the experiences of others, in some respects we each need to find our own way through our grief. For instance, some of us have a religious faith which can be of immeasurable support; others might find that we question long-held beliefs. Some discover a faith, whereas some of us may wish to work out our own philosophy. Some of us find creative activities such as art, music or gardening are therapeutic and calming. It might be the process rather than the eventual product that is most helpful. On the other hand, we may sometimes wish to read something light or watch television; a bit of distraction will not be a bad idea, as the intensity of our feelings leaves us exhausted.

Going forward

We will never be the same after the loss of our beloved child. It will take many months, or probably years, to weave the experience into our lives so that we find our 'new normal'. We will have changed, our lives will have changed, and we may now find that we have a different perspective on what we feel is important.

We want to live in ways that our child would be proud of, and we may eventually become involved with charity work or find other ways to honor our child's memory. However, this is not all that our life consists of. Trying to live the best life we can, in the circumstances, includes allowing ourselves to experience joy, to smile and even to laugh. We might feel a twinge of guilt at these moments, but we really should not. We all need to feel happy, and to truly live rather than merely survive. In living this 'new normal', we are treasuring and honoring the memories of our child. As the terrible rawness of grief softens, what remains intact is our bond of love with our child, a love that continues and grows with us.



The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
PO Box 51345
Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1345

July/August, 2020

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