

The Compassionate Friends

The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

www.modestoriverbanktcf.org

April 2021

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING

6:00 PM

Bridge Covenant Church
2201 Morrill Road
Riverbank, CA 95367
(Corner of Oakdale Rd and Morrill Rd)

*Please join us at our
next meeting on*

Monday, April 12th

**Please arrive by 5:50 p.m.
so we may begin promptly
at 6:00 p.m.**

Upcoming Meetings

May 10th

June 14th

July 12th

Visit us on Facebook
The Modesto Area Chapter
of TCF



Find us on Instagram at
Modestoriverbank_tcf



Our Mission

The mission of The Compassionate Friends:

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.

MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786

*Please leave a message and
a steering committee
member will return your
call.*



2021 Steering Committee

Tracey Parker
Chapter Leader
Devon Homme
Secretary
Elsie Freeman
Treasurer
Janet Neal
Outreach Coordinator
Lori Leitner
Hospitality & Library
Chad Homme
Public Relations
Kris Leitner
Newsletter Editor
Mike & Suzanne Casity
Website





IN-PERSON MEETING FOR APRIL

- The meeting time has been changed to 6:00 p.m.
- We will be meeting outside in the backyard area. A greeter will be out front to assist you.
- We will be following COVID-19 mandates by remaining six feet apart & asking all attendees to wear a mask.
- Please bring your own chair.
- Refreshments *will not* be provided at this meeting.
- Should inclement weather be an issue, we will offer an online Zoom meeting at the normal 7:00 p.m. meeting time. [Inclement Weather Zoom Meeting Link](#)



The vision statement of *The Compassionate Friends* is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped. For you, one of those who have found us, it is our sincerest wish to make to provide the understanding, support, and resources you may need on your grief journey. For those who still do not know they will need us, we would like to be as prepared as possible. We have created a brief six-question survey on the [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) website. We ask that you please take a moment to answer the questions so that we may know how to best assist our existing and future members. Please click on the link below to begin the survey. Thank You!

[Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends Membership Satisfaction Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](https://www.surveymonkey.com)



2nd Monthly Chapter Meeting – Sunday Conversations

Sunday, April 18th at 3:00 p.m.

It's a chance for us to "get together" to just chat!!

[Sunday Conversations Zoom Meeting Link](#)

5 Ways to Deal with Pandemic-Induced Stress

Keep anxiety and isolation from paralyzing your life.

The escalating outbreak of the [coronavirus](#) has created a perfect storm for [anxiety](#), isolation, and [depression](#) in our communities. Identifying constructive ways to address these mental health challenges is important not just for short-term health, but for long-term health as well. Here are five tips that we can each incorporate into our daily lives to help cope with pandemic-created stress.

1. Remember You Are Not Alone

Human beings are social animals by nature, but the coronavirus has threatened us with [social isolation](#). Especially for those living alone, this absence of human connection can exacerbate stress and create a level of anxiety that is unhealthy. To help bridge the disconnect and foster a greater connection to others, please try:

- Reaching out online. Create or join an online support group that allows you to connect with neighbors and discuss shared challenges, experiences, and interests in an open forum.
- Socializing digitally. Use cellphones, text messaging and video calling to continue to feel connected to friends, colleagues, and family while maintaining safe social distance.
- Regular check-ins. Keeping in contact with the ones you love and having the reassurance—however temporary—that they are okay can help reduce stress in an already [stressful](#) situation.

2. Establish Healthy Habits

When we take good care of our bodies, we optimize our ability to think clearly, solve problems, and manage our emotions. Healthy habits that you can control while dealing with pandemic-created stress include:

- Practice good sleep hygiene. Allow yourself enough time to get adequate sleep each night and create an environment that promotes rest. Avoid habits that can adversely affect your quality of sleep.
- Stay active. Exercise is key to maintaining a healthy mindset. Try to start the day by getting fresh air and exercise, if possible.
- Focus on [nutrition](#). Eating high-quality foods that contain plenty of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants help nourish the brain and protect against [oxidative stress](#). Eat right and regularly and be sure to stay hydrated.

3. Don't Dwell on [Grief](#)

Right now, people are feeling grief over the loss of routines, certainty, and a perception of themselves as being generally healthy and protected. Growing uncertainty and an ever-evolving news cycle of bad news have people feeling increasingly unsafe. Here are some thoughts on how you can process grief in constructive ways:

- Practice [gratitude](#). Many of us continue to be safe and healthy. For some, self-isolation means spending time with family that you might otherwise not have had.
- Exploring new hobbies. Broadening your horizons through new interests can prove therapeutic.
- Expressing feelings to friends and loved ones. Having an open dialogue with friends and family can help you process what you are grieving about and reinforces the understanding that you are not alone.

4. Remember to Laugh

There is mounting data to support the positive impact that [laughter](#) has on our health, both in the short-term and in the long-term. When you begin to laugh, it doesn't just enhance your mental state—it induces physical changes in your body including:

- Stimulating organs. Laughter enhances the body's intake of oxygen, stimulating the heart, lungs, and muscles to increase the endorphins released by the brain.
- Activating and relieving stress response. Laughter activates and relieves your stress response, which can increase and decrease your heart rate and blood pressure.
- Soothing tension. A good laugh stimulates circulation and promotes muscle relaxation—both essential for reducing physical symptoms of stress.

When possible and appropriate, try to share a laugh or a light moment with a friend or loved one.

5. Understand Good vs. Bad Anxiety

Some anxiety is productive—it's what motivates us to wash our hands often and distance ourselves from others when there's an important reason to do so. But unproductive anxiety can make our mind spin in all kinds of frightening directions. Remember to:

- Focus on the present. Staying grounded in the present prevents our anxiety from spinning stories about the future, like worrying excessively that you or someone you love will become fatally ill.
- Take reasonable precautions. Stocking up on essential supplies and practicing good hygiene and responsible social distancing are all reasonable precautions in response to a pandemic. Avoid the urge to panic.
- Be aware of distress reactions. Trouble [sleeping](#), difficulty concentrating, and a sense of being unsafe are all signs that someone is experiencing a distress reaction.

If you or someone you know are struggling with your mental health amid the COVID-19 pandemic, remember that you are not alone. Consult with your mental health provider to identify resources available to you from a safe social distance. Let's safeguard our bodies and minds from this pandemic.

[5 Ways to Deal with Pandemic-Induced Stress | Psychology Today](#)



~ Springtime and Grief ~

The Season of Spring and Grief

For those of us who are grieving, the season of spring can bring about a lot of deep emotions. Spring is a sign of new things and growth. The flowers are emerging from the ground and the people around you are excited about the upcoming warm weather and enjoying fun with their families. The combination of these things can give the bereaved a strong sense of loss and loneliness.

In our hearts, we are wishing we could share the bright new days ahead with our loved ones. We know that we will miss them when those days finally arrive. It is the dread of what feelings will arise, compounded by the excitement of others, that can throw a person who is grieving into a reclusive state. Easter and Mother's Day can be especially difficult. If these holidays are weighing heavy on your mind, think of a new tradition you can include on those days to honor and remember your loved one, such as planting flowers in their memory.

If you find yourself feeling like you want to be alone and you are not leaving your house, you may be showing signs of depression. Many of us choose to be alone during grief, especially for ones who are in the beginning stages. When the sun is shining, at least take yourself outside for a nice walk. You can even go to a park and walk on a trail or just sit on a bench and read or write in your journal. The sun will be good for you, as well as the fresh air.

We all need the time to process what we have lost and gone through. Be gentle on yourself during this season. Don't hesitate to reach out to others in local or online support groups that can relate to the feelings you are having. Grief counseling can also be of great help during these rough times when we are prone to feeling a stronger sense of loss.

The Season Of Spring And Grief - Healing The Grief

~ Ideas to Improve Your Mood ~

Get more sleep	Eat a good meal	Whistle
Exercise	Take slow deep breaths	Watch a video
Volunteer	Wash your car or windows	Smile
Watch the stars	Eat a piece of fruit	Mow your lawn
Journal your gratitude	Chew some gum	Admire flowers
Listen to music	Create a vision board	Go scavenger hunting
Laugh	Do something nice for someone	Dance
Declutter	Sing in the car or shower	Do some yoga
Hug/Cuddle	Start a garden	Go fishing
Pet a cat or dog	Engage in cultural activities	Connect with a friend
Do a puzzle	Enjoy some coffee or tea	Go to the beach
Take a walk in the woods	Eat some chocolate	Touch something soft
Go bird watching	Get a massage	Take a nap
Take a trip to the zoo	Read/join a book club	Meditate

OUR CHAPTER PHONE TREE



If you are struggling and need to talk, we are here for you. We have set up a phone tree and someone is available day or night. You can call or text us at (209)622-6786 and one of the Steering Committee will get back to you as soon as possible. You may also reach someone through the email address, tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com, or on our private Facebook page, which you can find by searching for *The Modesto-Riverbank Area Chapter of TCF*.

If you would like to be a part of our phone tree and be available for other members, please contact us through one of the above mentioned methods and we will add your name and number to our list.

♥ LOVE GIFTS ♥

Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, sibling or grandchild in any amount. Donations received are used for our annual Candle Lighting Program each December, for sending our monthly newsletter via US mail and for community outreach. We are here to reach out to other bereaved families who may not be aware we are here to lend our support after the death of a child. Please send your tax-deductible donation to the PO Box below.

Heyam Khacho in loving memory of her beloved daughter, Rita Farha

If you wish to make a Love Gift donation, please fill out the information below and send with a check to:

The Compassionate Friends
Modesto Area Chapter
PO Box 578713
Modesto, CA 95357

☐ Child, ☐ Sibling or ☐ Grandchild _____

Date of Birth _____ / _____ Date of Passing _____ / _____

Donation amount _____

Your Name _____

Telephone _____ Your email address _____

Your address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Would you like your gift listed in our monthly newsletter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling? The amount will remain anonymous Yes ___ No ___

The Compassionate Friends is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Gratitude in Grief...What?...

How can I possibly feel gratitude when I am grieving the loss of my loved one? How can I even recognize it? What do I even have to be grateful for?

Before answering those questions we need to look at the reality of the road of grief...

Early Grief- The Learning Stage

Early in one's grief the watchword is *stuck* not *movement*. This early grief is for learning about your feelings, your behaviors, your pain, your suffering. You are learning about your internal world; the world of pain, suffering and grief. It cannot be about movement (growth) while you are discovering this new world.

- You need to learn about this new world that has been set forth in front of you.
- You will learn as you go as you are unfamiliar with the territory
- You have to learn about your expectations and your possibilities.

There is a lot to learn in the expectations of grief. You will learn about yourself, other people, how the world address death and grieving and how YOU address death and grieving.

Possibilities is a more difficult idea to grasp in grief due to the (usual) lack of experience of the griever. One must recognize that grieving is similar to a new relationship, a new marriage or the beginning of life. We all begin in learners' mode.

In this learning stage, the griever does not recognize their ability to change or to make decisions or to make any movement of any kind.

Allow yourself to experience what is occurring to you in the moment that you find yourself experiencing it. (*feel your feelings*) This is the ONLY way to get to and through any movement in your grief process. As painful as this is, every griever must go through this early learning stage of grieving to seek transformation.

Movement in Grief

Although it's well known that there are no stages to grief, it is absolutely important for grievers to move through this early learning period to be able to move in their own grief process. The grief process is not incremental steps; one step to the next point in your process. However, accepting and experiencing your early grief allows you to move through your process with *you*, with *your learning* and with *your abilities* to see what is necessary for you in your own process and life.

Gratitude in Grief

Gratitude: the quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful, appreciative of benefits received.

It is not easy to understand how gratitude can help you in your grief process looking through the lens of pain. It will not allow for the feeling or the understanding of gratitude. Also, it is extremely difficult to see any possibilities in the early learning period. But, by allowing yourself to experience the early grieving to step back, look at you and your process, you will be able to gain a larger perspective which can lead to a larger view of your life.

Similar to grief, learning to be and living in gratitude is not an overnight process. Neither is it one size fits all nor does gratitude feel good automatically when one acknowledges gratitude for the first time.

Living in gratitude, like living in grief, is a process that evolves. It is a body, mind and soul process that takes much time, it takes much reasoning and it takes your heart opening to make your transformation possible.

Have patience and compassion with yourself. Gratitude just might be the repaving for your road of grief....

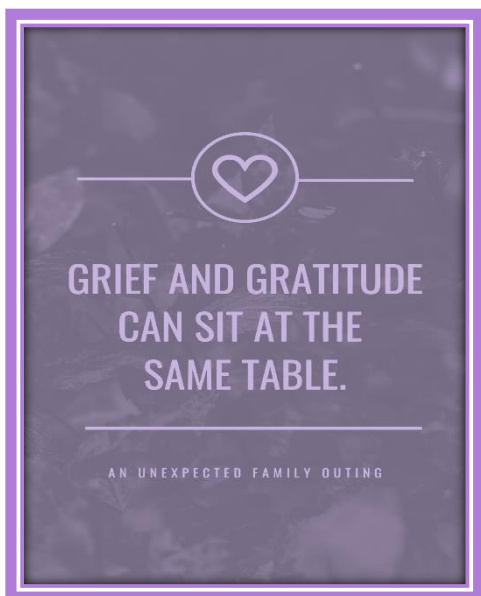
[Gratitude in Grief...What?... | The Grief Toolbox](#)



Check out our closed Facebook page, The Modesto Area of TCF. Make a request to join the page and an Administrator will approve your request.

Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at - *modestoriverbankarea_tcf*.

Our Steering Committee wants to provide the best possible support to each of our TCF Chapter members and friends. Please contact a member of the Steering Committee with any concerns you have or any ideas about how our Chapter can be of support to you and others. We're also available if you'd like to talk about your child or some aspect of the challenges of your bereavement journey. You can reach us by email at: tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com or by phone at 209-622-6786 or on Facebook.



Please remember to send in your child's photo so that it can be added to the new TCF Modesto-Riverbank website.

Send photos to: scasity@comcast.net



visit our website for information and to stay up to date on chapter events.

www.modestoriverbanktcf.org

Support our chapter by using
Amazon Smile

smile.amazon.com

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(click on the link above for further information).

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- 1**

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- 2**

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Download or update to the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app on your phone. You can find it in the App Store for iOS or Google Play for Android.
- 3**

Turn on AmazonSmile

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