

# 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](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

March 2021

[tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com)

#### MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM

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

*The meeting scheduled for  
**Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**  
will be conducted as a  
Zoom meeting online*

#### Upcoming Meetings

April 12<sup>th</sup>

May 10<sup>th</sup>

June 14<sup>th</sup>

Visit us on Facebook  
The Modesto Area Chapter  
of TCF

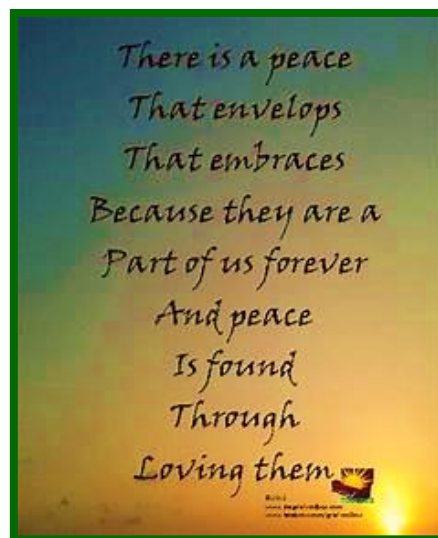


Find us on Instagram at  
Modestoriverbank\_tcf



#### 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



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)

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*Let's Stay Connected!*

## 2nd Monthly Chapter Meeting

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

Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

[Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)



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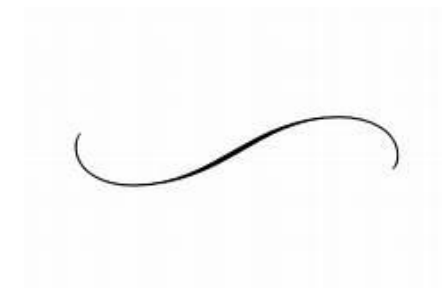
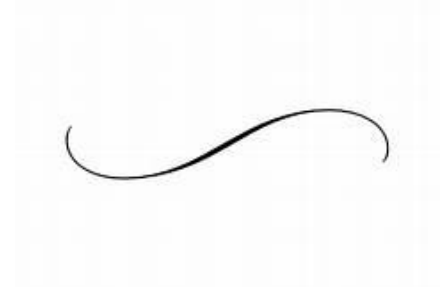
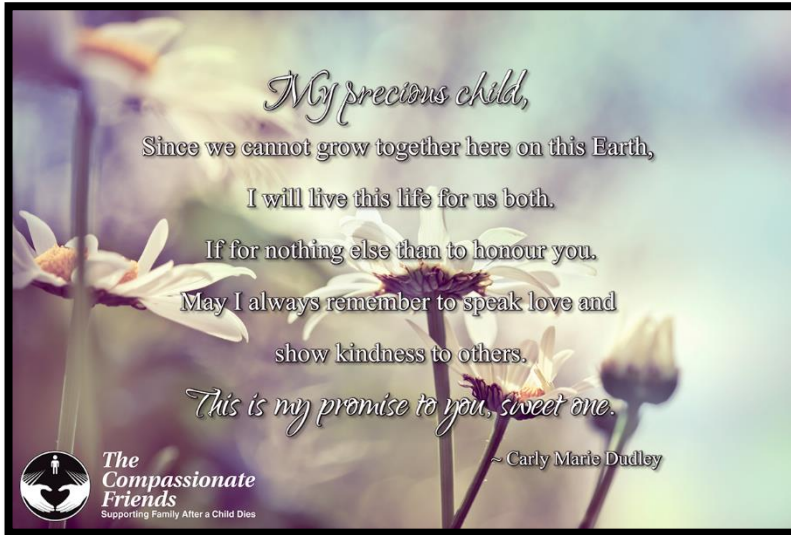
*Daylight Savings Time*

*for the year 2021*

*starts on*

*Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>*

we're all in this together

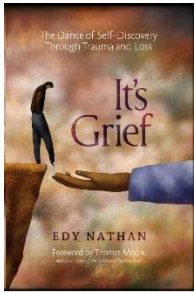




# The Role of Anger in Grief

The following is excerpted with permission from:

***It's Grief: The Dance of Self-Discovery Through Trauma and Loss*** - by Edy Nathan



As a powerful survival instinct, anger is integral to defending your inner core. We use anger to fight for boundaries and to communicate abject fears. These are the necessary and healthy aspects of anger. When feeling threatened or scared, you have probably used anger to defend yourself or to be heard.

In the mourning process, anger is one of the emotions that moves in and out like the tide. Sometimes it envelops you like a flood, and if you respect its power, you can learn more about how and why it operates.

Instead of avoiding it or letting it mold you, you want to tap into the ability to converse with its core: Identify what fuels it and gain insight into what quiets it.

## Respect Your Anger

Respect anger's capacity to help you heal, while also understanding how anger can contribute to losing your sense of self. The experience of being lost in anger can feel like emotional whiplash. It can surprise you and rise within the body without caution or warning. The rawness of your anger filters into your life with a sense of chaos and emotional states of disarray. It can be frightening to be consumed by this seemingly destructive emotion. Naturally, you desire to disengage from its clutches. Do you ever wonder what would happen if you weren't afraid of anger? If you actually allowed full engagement with it, what do you imagine would happen within your psyche?

Anger is one of the phases of grief. In this phase, two distinct impulses surge within you. The first impulse is to externalize the anger by lashing out aggressively to show others how you feel (and almost forcing them to feel it with you). The second is to internalize the anger by attempting to keep it hidden. The fear of letting the anger out may occur because you believe that once out, it cannot be concealed or controlled. You would be exposing a part of you that is volatile, explosive, and perhaps unmanageable.

Either internalized or externalized anger will result in the same sense of drowning and emotional deregulation, which can leave you feeling unstable. Whether you act out your anger through aggressive acts, or try to hide your anger, neither option resolves your emotional response. If the soul is not allowed to tangle with anger as part of the mourning process and anger is not given the reverence it deserves, this unresolved, internalized anger will erupt into rage, and despair will surely follow. When this happens, the abundant internal chaos takes up space and doesn't want to leave.

## Stay Connected

One way to disconnect from this type of raging is to delve into the initial experience of your anger; especially if no one has taught you that anger is allowed. When you experience anger, often the first instinct is to hide it or shield yourself from it. However, this particular dance requires going into the depths of the soul so you can become aware of other emotions that serve as feeders to the anger in your grief. Fear of the unknown can lead to despair and may be a feeder to rage. Rage can be easier to express than fear.

Anger is on the opposite end of the spectrum from anxiety. When you are overcome by anxiety, if you think about and engage with your anger you may find that the anxiety disappears. Understanding anger as a tool for anxiety relief is critical to exploring any resistance you may have to expressing your anger.

## The Release

Your initiation into this part of the dance is discovering that what has angered you is directly related to the sense of helplessness you may be feeling. In any loss, the lack of power to change what you've lost, how you were traumatized, or how you could have reacted differently is directly related to a sense of despair. It can be helpful to write in your journal/notebook as you begin to examine what may be feeding your anger by exploring what fears or anxiety have left you immobilized and feeling ineffective.

No one likes to experience powerlessness. Once the anger is recognized and established, anxiety will often dissipate, and the anger finally comes out of hiding.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND COPING DURING CORONAVIRUS

### REACTIONS YOU MAY FEEL INCLUDE:

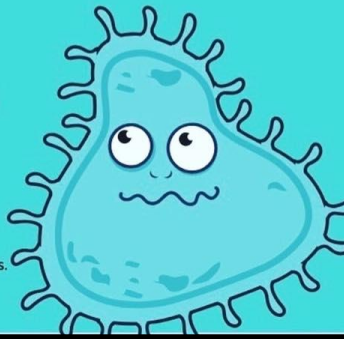
- Fear and worry about your own health status and that of your loved ones.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

### THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOURSELF:

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of Coronavirus.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade.
- Connect with others and share your concerns and how you are feeling with friends or family members.
- Maintain healthy relationships.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.

### TAKING CARE OF YOUR WELLBEING:

- Connect with people
- Decide on your routine
- Try to keep active
- Keep your mind stimulated
- Take care with news and information
- Find ways to relax and be creative



## Three Ideas on How To Cope With The Loneliness of Loss

### 1. Appreciate the people who do check in and allow yourself to talk with them openly.

Your true friends want to be there for you -- it's an honor for them -- and it's what you would do it in return.

**2. Use distraction when you need it but know there will be a time when it's important to work through your loss.** Often, there is a stage in grief when you fill your life with things that will take your mind away from what has happened. In time, know it's better to stop and face what's waiting for you.

**3. Realize it's not that people don't care -- they may not know what questions to ask or whether you're open to sharing.** People may fumble around and not know what to say, but be attempting to reach out. Those people who are facing what you are, or have done so in the past, can offer a kind of wisdom that others cannot.

## Stay positive, keep learning

5 tips for children and families learning and living through social distancing



### STICK TO A ROUTINE

Keep getting up and going to bed at set times. This is **ENORMOUSLY** important for your **mental and physical** health.



Plan your days with time for **work and play**. This will help you to stay **positive**, calm and productive.



### MAKE TIME TO BE CREATIVE

Paint. Write. Bake. Play. Dance. Make.

Take time to **discover** new talents, or nurture old ones.



Find out what things the adults in your home can do and learn from them, or use the internet to discover and learn new skills. The **possibilities** are endless!



### LIMIT SCREENTIME

Tablets and computers are going to play a huge part in your learning, but don't let yourself become a **screen zombie!**



Be mindful of how you use screens and try to take lots of breaks.

Here are some tips:

1. No screens an hour before bed.
2. See if your device has a focus mode or other way to shut off addictive apps.
3. Do as many things in the real world, as you do in the virtual!



### GO OUTSIDE, STAY ACTIVE

Spending time in the **sunlight** is essential for wellbeing. Make time **everyday** to be outside. If you have a garden, use it. If you don't, take walks with your family wherever you can safely.



Staying **active** is also really important. **Getting moving**, little and often, will help you keep fit, boost your mood and build your strength.



### TALK, SHARE, BE GRATEFUL

The next few months will be challenging, and it's normal to have some worried feelings.



**Talk** to family and friends. **Share** how you feel and if you are able to, listen to others too.

If you have relatives or neighbours that are isolated, arrange with a grown up to call and check in. **Stay in touch** with friends and family via post, telephone or email.

**Be grateful** for each other. Now more than ever.

## 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](mailto: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.

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## ♥ 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.

*In memory of our beloved children, grandchildren and siblings.*

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 \_\_\_\_\_

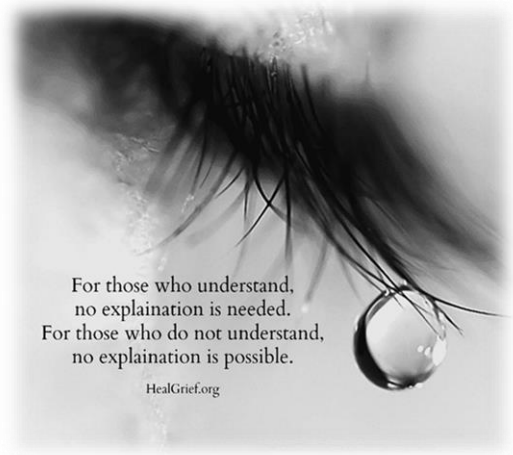
Your address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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.



# Grief: Coping with the loss of your loved one



For those who understand,  
no explanation is needed.  
For those who do not understand,  
no explanation is possible.

HealGrief.org

*Research shows that most people can recover from loss on their own through the passage of time if they have social support and healthy habits.*

Coping with the loss of a close friend or family member may be one of the hardest challenges that many of us face. When we lose a spouse, sibling or parent our grief can be particularly intense. Loss is understood as a natural part of life, but we can still be overcome by shock and confusion, leading to prolonged periods of sadness or depression. The sadness typically diminishes in intensity as time passes, but grieving is an important process in order to overcome these feelings and continue to embrace the time you had with your loved one.

Everyone reacts differently to death and employs personal coping mechanisms for grief. Research shows that most people can recover from loss on their own through the passage of time if they have social support and healthy habits. It may take months or a year to come to terms with a loss.

There is no “normal” time period for someone to grieve. Don’t expect to pass through phases of grief either, as research suggests that most people do not go through stages as progressive steps.

If your relationship with the deceased was difficult, this will also add another dimension to the grieving process. It may take some time and thought before you are able to look back on the relationship and adjust to the loss.

Human beings are naturally resilient, considering most of us can endure loss and then continue on with our own lives. But some people may struggle with grief for longer periods of time and feel unable to carry out daily activities. Individuals with severe grief or [complicated grief](#) could benefit from the help of a psychologist or another licensed mental health professional with a specialization in grief.

## Moving on with life

Mourning the loss of a close friend or relative takes time, but research tells us that it can also be the catalyst for a renewed sense of meaning that offers purpose and direction to life.

Grieving individuals may find it helpful to use some of the following strategies to help them process and come to terms with loss:

- **Talk about the death of your loved one** with friends or colleagues in order to help you understand what happened and remember your friend or family member. Avoidance can lead to isolation and will disrupt the healing process with your support systems.
- **Accept your feelings.** You may experience a wide range of emotions from sadness, anger or even exhaustion. All of these feelings are normal and it’s important to recognize when you are feeling this way. If you feel stuck or overwhelmed by these emotions, it may be helpful to talk with a licensed psychologist or other mental health professional who can help you cope with your feelings and find ways to get back on track.
- **Take care of yourself and your family.** Eating healthy foods, exercising and getting plenty of sleep can help your physical and emotional health. The grieving process can take a toll on one’s body. Make sure you check in with your loved ones and that they are taking the necessary healthy steps to maintain their health.
- **Reach out and help others dealing with the loss.** Spending time with loved ones of the deceased can help everyone cope. Whether it’s sharing stories or listening to your loved one’s favorite music, these small efforts can make a big difference to some. Helping others has the added benefit of making you feel better as well.
- **Remember and celebrate the lives of your loved ones.** Anniversaries of a lost loved one can be a difficult time for friends and family, but it can also be a time for remembrance and honoring them. It may be that you decide to collect donations to a favorite charity of the deceased, passing on a family name to a baby or planting a garden in memory. What you choose is up to you, as long as it allows you to honor that unique relationship in a way that feels right to you.

## How psychologists can help

Psychologists are trained to help people better handle the fear, guilt or anxiety that can be associated with the death of a loved one. If you need help dealing with your grief or managing a loss, consult with a psychologist or other licensed mental health professional. Psychologists can help people build their resilience and develop strategies to get through their sadness. Practicing psychologists use a variety of evidence-based treatments — most commonly psychotherapy — to help people improve their lives. Psychologists, who have doctoral degrees, receive one of the highest levels of education of any health care professional.

[Grief: Coping with the loss of your loved one \(apa.org\)](#)

This article was adapted from a March 2011 post by Katherine C. Nordal, PhD.

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.

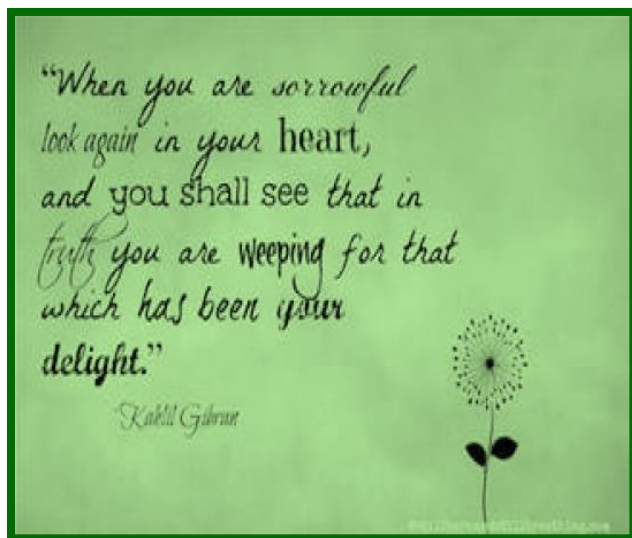
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Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at - *modestoriverbankarea\_tcf*.

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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](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com) or by phone at 209-622-6786 or on Facebook.

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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](mailto:scasity@comcast.net)**



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

**[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)**

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Support our chapter by using  
*Amazon Smile*

**[smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)**

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

(click on the link above for further information).

### How to turn on AmazonSmile in the mobile app

- 1

#### Join AmazonSmile

If you are not already an AmazonSmile member, [sign up](#) on your web browser. Simply select your favorite charity to start generating donations, at no cost to you.

- 2

#### Get the app

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.