

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

October 2021

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 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, October 11th

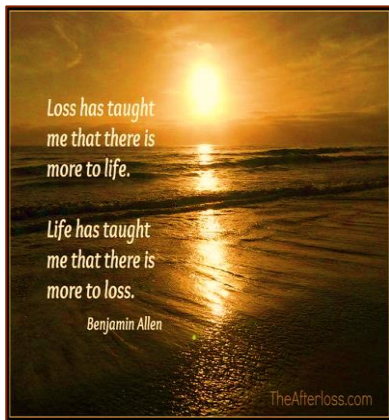
*Please arrive by 6:50 p.m.
so we may begin promptly
at 7:00 p.m. *

Upcoming Meetings

November 8th

December 13th

January 10th



Are you taking a vacation? Visiting family? Moving? Helping someone new to TCF to find a chapter?

Use the link below to find TCF chapters in other cities and states

[Chapter Meeting Locator - Compassionate Friends](#)



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



2nd Monthly Meeting

Thursday, October 21st at 7:00 p.m.

Please join us for an online meeting.

[October Zoom Chapter Meeting](#)



Sunday Conversations

Sunday, October 24th at 3:00 p.m.

A chance for us to just chat!!

[October Sunday Conversations Zoom Meeting](#)



*The boxes are unpacked and our
welcome mat is out.*

Join us...

Friends of Jessica's House Grand Opening Celebration Thursday, October 14

Tours: 2:00 - 7:00 p.m. | Ribbon cutting ceremony 4:00 p.m.
1225 W. Christoffersen Pkwy., Turlock
Refreshments will be served on the back patio following your tour.
Please email RSVP by October 4 to: rsvp@jessicashouse.org



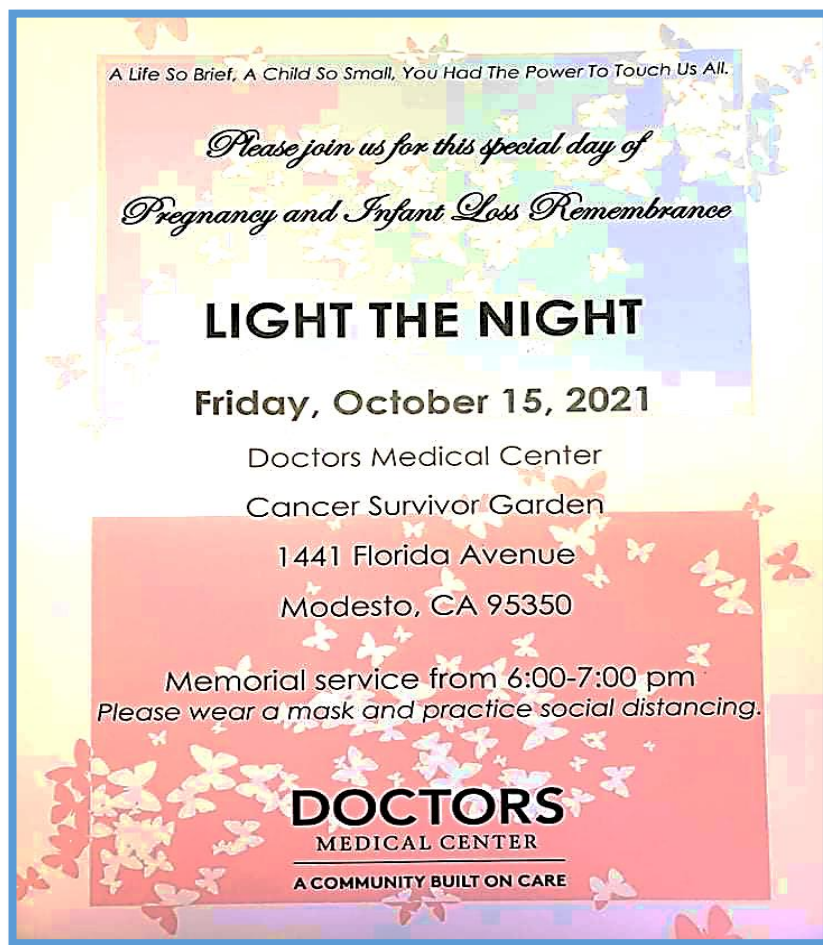
**Jessica's
House**

On the day of your visit to Jessica's House, please visit our website,
jessicahouse.org, for current masking and safety guidelines. We are committed
to you, your family, and our community's health and safety.

1225 W. Christoffersen Pkwy., Turlock, CA

95382 | (209) 250-5395 | jessicashouse.org





Out of the Darkness Modesto Walk

Event Details

Date: **10/16/2021**

Location: **Graceda Park, Modesto, CA**

Registration: **9:00 am**

Event Time: **10:00 am - 1:00 pm**



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

www.afsp.org

For more information, please contact:

Contact Name: **Barbara Chiesa**

Contact Phone: **209-918-4599**

Contact Email: chiesa3@aol.com



Offering Help After A Suicide Death

Friends for Survival Inc. - Suicide Bereavement, Bereavement Support

The group meets, by Zoom, on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Pre-registration is required @ [Meetings \(friendsforsurvival.org\)](http://Meetings(friendsforsurvival.org))

The Myth Of Closure After Loss



“This wasn’t supposed to happen! Tell me why this has happened!” These are the spoken words of countless bereaved parents throughout numerous years in numerous languages — a never-ending and always present wound in the Souls of those who have buried their children.

Parental grief is forever boundless, an ever-present, deep-seated wound that has no name. There’s a reason no label has been ascribed to those who have lost a child — it is too foreign a concept, a much too chaotic form of brain freeze, an enormously frightening emotion for any language in the world to even consider naming. Within that foreign concept lies the heart of the matter — losing a child is the most frightening, unspeakable, unresolvable, and ultimately the most devastating deprivation of a lifetime. It is disorienting, unimaginable, and is the most unacknowledged universal trauma of them all.

It is the very nature of this grief that makes the concept of “closure” almost laughable. Psychology tells us to look to closure as a way to live within this boundless grief. Finding the certainty we need to make things whole again is supposed to exist within this concept so quickly spoken of by well-meaning friends and therapists. The need for cognitive closure (NFCC) is supposed to provide us with an ending to all ambiguity and bring us certainty. Within that certainty, we should find freedom from all the questions that live and breed in our lives as to “why” our child had to die. The problem is — most parents see their child’s death as multifactional.

It wasn’t just the child who was lost; it was the parent as well. The parents lose their way in the world, and the entire premise of how the universe operates is shaken to its core. There is a natural order in life, a death order if you will. First, it’s the grandparents, then the parents. All should pass from this world in the natural order of life events. At least, that’s what we think. But it doesn’t happen that way in real life. Children die, and the overwhelming loss that becomes the new way of living in the world is never one for which closure exists. The feeling of having lost a limb becomes a life wound, a soul wound that never heals.

There truly is no definition for precisely what this form of grief feels like. It is a wrenching sadness and despair from which recovery cannot be found in what we call “closure.” Except that which somehow can reach deep within the recesses of what we know as Spirit and start a healing process — acknowledging that life isn’t fair, we never really “get over” this kind of loss, we keep on breathing, and that children do die.

Trying to accept our, and our children's mortality, trying to accept all that has been or will be or can never be again, deciding how we will honor our child and keep them "alive" within our family, and trying to accept the fact that death is part and parcel of all life – may be the key to survival for those parents who suffer endlessly with questions for which there are no answers. But there is never certainty, never total acceptance, and never closure in our collective human condition that keeps us from fully accepting all these things. And, perhaps, an even more substantial impediment to consider can be found within the parents' need to "keep and maintain" the relationship with the lost child.

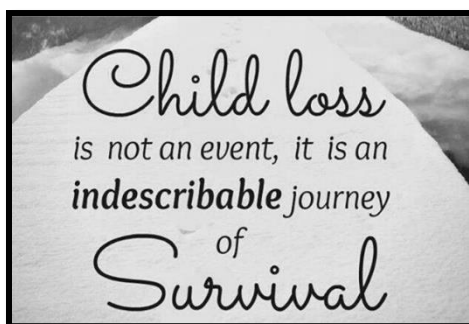
Many times, holding onto the grief becomes the staple needing to maintain that relationship. As if letting go of the pain means letting go of the relationship – losing their child all over again. Managing the connection within the grief experienced at the time of death can become all-important to a bereaved parent. Those final moments may be all that can be "felt" because anything else — memories of the good, the bad, and everything-in-between can become tangled up with unanswerable questions and lead to the could of's, should of's and if only's of having no future with the lost child.

Losing a future together can be often is just as devastating as is the actual physical death of that child. Even thinking of closure as a possibility then becomes some foreign notion that will never be considered because it is seen as a complete loss of all relationships – past and future. Healing from the death of a child is a lifetime journey if there is any healing at all! And looking for "closure" does one thing and one thing only — it merely grounds you in the very thing that you are trying to heal within your very damaged and wounded Soul. I mean, life is hard stuff. It presents itself in the light of day and the dark of night in varying shades of joy and despair-all on the same day. Life is amazing. Then it's not. It's mundane. Then it's horrific.

You can't out-run it any more than you can defeat it. You can't change it without changing yourself, your environment, and your very Spirit. You can deny it and try to hide from the realities of it for a while until it catches up to you, which it always does! Life can be messy and painful and joyful and filled with grief and laughter all at the same time. Don't try to plot it on a straight path; you will lose every time!

All you can do is look within and try to accept the mortality of all things. Then decide how you will be "in this world" and how you will honor those you love while trying to figure out how to accept yourself again. Forgetting isn't an option. No drug, no mind-bending herb, no (as the song says) "wishing and hoping and thinking and dreaming" will take you back into that "before time." That moment in time is forever gone. There is now only the "after time" to be dealt with and incorporated into what is remaining. What that "remaining" stuff is, well, that's up to the survivors to decide for themselves.

The Myth Of Closure After Loss - Still Standing Magazine



The Unique Loneliness of Grief

The intersection of grief and loneliness is complicated. Though loneliness, as a concept, is one I think many assume we understand. We equate loneliness to the very definable concept of being alone, which means *“without other people,”* and thanks to “lonely people” archetypes — like the spinsters with ten cats and misunderstood teenagers — we think we have a good idea of how loneliness looks.

The trouble is that loneliness is subjective (i.e., different from person to person), so there’s no way anyone can *truly* know what it looks like. In the [Encyclopedia of Mental Health \(1998\)](#) researchers, Daniel Perlman and Letita Anne Peplau define loneliness as,

“The subjective psychological discomfort people experience when their network of social relationships is significantly deficient in either quality or quantity.”

In other words, loneliness occurs when a person’s social relationships don’t meet their interpersonal *needs or desires*. I want to note; the above definition says nothing about the state of being alone. Instead, that loneliness is a feeling of discomfort that arises when a person subjectively feels unfulfilled by their social relationships. Loneliness is dependent on what a person *“needs and desires,”* and this measure is personal and varies drastically from one individual to the next.

Based on this definition, prototypical characterizations of *“loneliness”* seem misguided. Individual loneliness is defined by what a person *wants* in relation to what they *have*. So whether a person has 100 great family and friends, if they long for something or someone they don’t have —like an intimate partner, a friend they can open up to, a group of people who “get them,” a family, etc. — they are liable to feel lonely.



If you’re grieving, you may feel this has become the story of your life. There are aspects of grief that make loneliness seem inevitable and unsolvable. Primarily, the fact that what you *desire* is your loved one, and what you *have* is an emptiness molded so precisely to your loved one’s likeness that no one else could ever fill it.

People who are grieving are at a disadvantage when it comes to loneliness because the person they long for is gone. I’ve come to understand that loneliness after the death of a loved one is many things. Above all else, it’s the ache of having loved someone so much that pieces of you became them, and pieces of them became you.

When they left this Earth, they took pieces of your shared life with them, and now you have to live a life that feels incomplete. Some people may also say they lost one of the few people in this world who really truly “got” them.

Once your brain starts thinking in an *“I’m on my own, so I have to look out for myself”* kind of way, it may start to guard against others by pushing them away. And as you might expect, this perpetuates feelings of loneliness.

You can't easily solve loneliness caused by grief. It takes time and effort. You will never fill your loved one's void that simply won't happen. Instead, you have to find other ways to connect and fill in alternative spaces.

How do you do this? I sadly can't answer that for you. I guess I would say that, when you are ready, open yourself up to the love of people in your life.

You can hold on to your loved one, while at the same time, accepting the company and support of others. And maybe, if necessary, seeking out new people in the process. It won't be easy, and it won't be perfect, but perhaps in time, you can partially fill the hole left by your loved one with the love of many.



The Unique Loneliness of Grief - Whats your Grief

♥ 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 loving memory of all our beloved children, grandchildren & 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.

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.

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.



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
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(click on the link above for further information).

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3

Turn on AmazonSmile

Open the app and find 'Settings' in the main menu (≡). Tap on 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile on your phone.