

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

November 2020

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, November, 9th
will be conducted as a
Zoom meeting online

Upcoming Meetings

December 14th

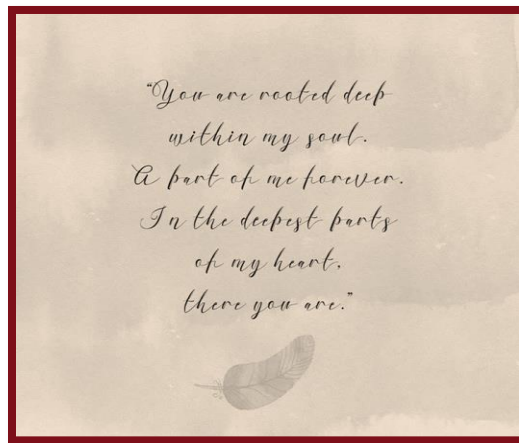
January 11th

February 8th

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

If you leave a message a
steering committee member
will return your call.

2020 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





November events and activities
remain cancelled or postponed until
further notice



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.

December Slide Show

Our chapter has participated in the annual TCF World Wide Candle Lighting in December every year since 2009. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will not be hosting a live event this year. This is an event we always look forward to, and we apologize that it has to be cancelled.

We would like to honor all our beloved children, siblings and grandchildren this December by presenting a slide show, similar to what we have done the last two years at the annual event. If you would like to have a photo of your loved one included in the slide show, please email it to us at: tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com. If we already have a photo of your loved one on file, you needn't resend; just email us if you would like to use a different photo. All photos need to be received by November 30th. We will be sharing the slide show at the monthly zoom meeting and for those who are unable to attend the meeting we will provide other viewing options. We encourage you to have a candle ready to light for your loved one as you watch the slide show.

"We are the rememberers, the people left behind, to keep the one who's gone from us alive in heart and mind ... the people left to cherish and preserve their legacy. Yes, we are the rememberers and we will always be."



GRIEF TIP:

Drink Water

I have a list I wrote for myself in those very first months called: some survival things. Number two on that list is: crying for three months has really been dehydrating. Please drink water. Oh, it was so early then. I can close my eyes and feel it. The same is true now as it was then: Drink. Drink water. Your body needs it.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Do not turn your anger on yourself.

This is what you are doing when you think you aren't doing this right, that you're the one messing up your continued connection, that you should be better at this. Notice you're angry. Call it that. Name it for what it is, don't turn it on yourself. The answer to constriction and anger is to name it, not beat on yourself.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Safety First

Sometimes you simply do not care one bit whether you live or die. If you are driving while crying too hard to see straight, pull over. If you are about to get in the car, help yourself calm down before you start. Distraught driving is dangerous. I kept driving, or stopped driving, because I did not want to risk harming someone else. So – safety first. Do it for yourself, if you can. Do it for others if you must.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Say no. Say yes.

You cannot afford any big drains to your energy, and you can't afford to miss too many ways to replenish it. This will mean saying no to people, places, and events that are too much for you. This also means saying the occasional yes to things that have brought, or could bring, a small amount of light or love into your hour, your day, your week. Say no to what drains you further, say yes to what might offer even the smallest respite or support.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Tend something

Clean out the garden. Water the plants. Brush the animals. Bake someone a cake. Send a care package. Why this soothed me, I don't know. I'm sure it has something to do with thinking of others, or giving love, or getting out of myself for awhile. Whatever the reason, tending something seemed to help. It did then, and it still does now.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Eat

This is a tricky one. Some people eat under stress; some people, like me, lose all desire or interest in food. I was also under my doctor's care at this time, and she let me know she would intervene if she felt I was in danger. Some people develop serious, lasting physical challenges due to what we call "the grief diet." You might find that small doses of healthy, nutrient-dense food are more easily tolerated by your mind and body than full-on meals. Do what you can.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



Self-Care



is a **Priority**

GRIEF TIP:

Read

My notes from back then say simply: It seems to put you in a better place. If you are a reader by nature, you may find yourself starving for words. I read and discarded more books than I can remember now. The ones that fed me, I devoured. It's true: the right words will put you in a better place.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Get outside

Being outside in a non-human world is a relief. The trees will not ask, "How are you really?" and the wind does not care if you cry. There is a lot to be said about being in places that don't need anything from you. Getting out into the natural world can be a bit tricky if your loss happened outside in nature; you may need to experiment.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Move

This is the most reliable thing. And by "reliable," I mean the thing that is the most likely to induce even the smallest measure of calm. Do yoga, go for a run, or a hike, or a walk. Even to the top of the block and back is a good place to begin. Not because it solves anything, but because movement is good.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



GRIEF TIP:

Shower

Really. You will feel just the tiniest bit better. The same goes for sweeping the floor or any other seemingly tedious and irrelevant task of hygiene. Really. You will feel just the tiniest bit better to be clean.

-Megan Devine
refugeingrief.com



How to Deal With Grief During the Holidays

The holidays can be the toughest time of the year.

The swell of grief around the holidays is a common reason clients enter my therapy office this time of year. People often seek help for the immense sorrow that starts surfacing right around Thanksgiving.



I experienced that wave of grief in my own life when my husband passed away. Christmas music, holiday parties, and festive decorations that were meant to bring joy served as painful reminders of my loss. As it is for most people experiencing loss, the holiday season was the most painful time of all.

If you're wondering how to get through the holidays this year without your loved one, these strategies can help:

1. Trust That Grief Is Part of Healing

Time doesn't heal the pain associated with a loss; it's what you do with that time that matters. Grief is the process by which you heal. Experiencing the pain—rather than constantly trying to escape it—can actually help you feel better in the long-term.

So while it may be tempting to pretend the holidays don't exist—or to numb the pain with alcohol—temporarily avoiding the pain only prolongs the anguish. Eventually, the holidays will get easier, but only if you allow yourself to experience the grief of going through them without your loved one.

2. Set Healthy Boundaries

You certainly don't have to force yourself to face every holiday event or celebratory tradition, however. If attending a tree lighting ceremony or participating in the office gift swap is likely to bring about too many painful memories this year, be willing to say no. Other people may try to convince you to participate, but you certainly don't have to try to please everyone.

3. Focus on What You Can Control

There are a lot of things you can't control about the holidays. You may be subjected to Christmas music in the waiting room of your doctor's office or you may overhear your co-workers constantly talking about their holiday plans. While you can't prevent those things from happening, there are some things you can control.

Think about what you can do to lessen the heartache when you can. It's OK to limit your decorations or shop for presents online only. Pick a few things you can do to assert some control over the holiday cheer, and keep in mind that life goes on for other people happy to celebrate this year.



4. Plan Ahead

Often, the anticipation over how hard something is going to be is worse than the actual event. So while Thanksgiving dinner may only last two hours, you could easily spend three weeks dreading it. Create a simple plan for how you'll get through the holidays to avoid extending your anguish.

Often, it's helpful to create an escape plan. Drive yourself to holiday functions or ride with a trusted friend who will take you home whenever you want. Just knowing you can easily leave at any time can help you enjoy the activity much more than you would if you felt stuck.

5. Allow Yourself to Feel a Range of Emotions

The holidays can bring about a wide range of emotions. You might feel joy, guilt, and sadness all within a few minutes. Allow yourself to feel those emotions without judging yourself or thinking you should be happy or you shouldn't be laughing.

6. Find a Way to Honor Your Memories

Create a special way to memorialize the person you've lost. Whether you decide to light a candle every night or eat your loved one's favorite food, honoring your loved one can serve as a tangible reminder that although your loved one is gone, the love never dies.

7. Create New Traditions

Don't be afraid to create new traditions this year too. It's OK to get creative and do something a little out of the ordinary. You can also alter old traditions and make them fit better with the new phase in your life.

8. Do Something Kind for Others

Even when you're in the midst of grief, you still have something to offer the world. Performing a few acts of kindness can be really good for a grieving person's spirit. Donate gifts to families in need, serve meals at a soup kitchen, or volunteer to help people at a nursing home make holiday crafts if you're up for it.

9. Ask for Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help when you're struggling with the holidays. Reminding loved ones that you're having a rough time may be enough, but you also may want to reach out for more support. Look for support groups or contact a professional counselor to help you deal with your grief in a healthy manner.

Author: Amy Morin, LCSW www.psychologytoday.com





The Cord

We are connected, my child and I,
by an invisible cord not seen by the eye.

It's not like the cord that connects us 'til birth
This cord can't been seen by any on Earth.

This cord does it's work right from the start.
It binds us together attached to my heart.

I know that it's there though no one can see
The invisible cord from my child to me.

The strength of this cord is hard to describe.
It can't be destroyed, it can't be denied.

It's stronger than any cord man could create.
It withstands the test, can hold any weight.

And though you are gone, though you're not here with me,
The cord is still there, but no one can see.

It pulls at my heart, I am bruised...I am sore,
But this cord is my lifeline as never before.

I am thankful that God connects us this way
A mother and child, death can't take it away!



*The
Compassionate
Friends*
Lehigh Valley Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Author Unknown

[Facebook.com/TCFLehighValley](https://www.facebook.com/TCFLehighValley)





♥ 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.

Janet Neal in memory of her beloved son, Josh Neal

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?

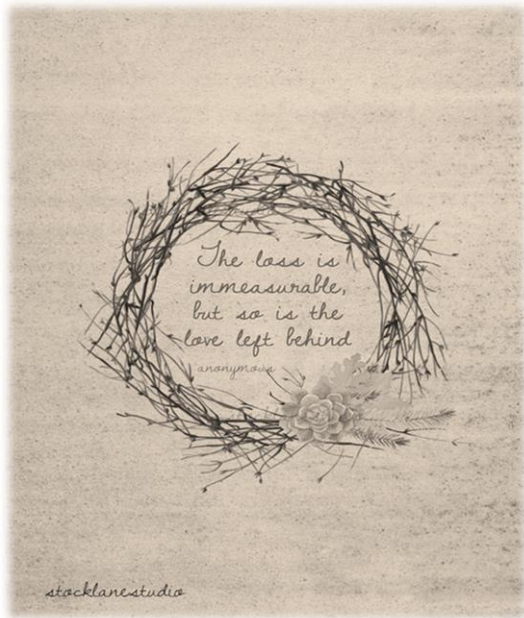
The amount will remain anonymous Yes ____ No ____

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.



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

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3

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