



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS SOUTHEASTERN NEW BRUNSWICK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive reconciliation of grief following the death of a child of any age and from any cause, and to provide information to help others be supportive.

June 2018

We are pleased to provide the first newsletter from our chapter. As we approach our 3-year anniversary in September, we continue to try to provide helpful resources to bereaved parents. To reduce the onus of putting together a regular newsletter, we are providing, for the most part, articles taken from other Compassionate Friends newsletters.

Monthly Meetings

Our monthly support meetings usually take place at 6:00 pm the second Sunday evening of each month unless that day happens to occur on a special day, such as Mother`s Day, in which case our meeting is the following Sunday. Meeting reminders are sent to everyone on the email list. Our meetings presently take place at the Town of Riverview Boardroom at 55 Biggs Drive in Riverview.

Chapter Contacts

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Upcoming Events

- Our next three meetings are scheduled for June 10, July 8, and August 12, to be confirmed by a reminder email.
- Our annual balloon release will take place in September, with details yet to be confirmed.
- Our 10-week intensive Grief Reconciliation Program, offered twice a year, will next be offered in September with details yet to be confirmed.

Love and Hope

*On a cold winter day the sun went out
Grief walked in to stay
I turned away from the unwanted guest
And bid him be on his way.
Grief was merciless, he brought his friends . . .
Loneliness, Fear and Despair.
They walk these rooms unceasingly
In the somber cloaks they wear.
Every so often now, Love pays a call
She always has Hope by her side
I welcome Love as well as Hope
For I thought surely they had died.
Love counsels Grief in a most gentle way
Bids him be still for a while
Then Love walks with me through memory's hall
And for a time . . . I can smile.
- Kerry Marston, TCF/Grand Junction,*

Please Don't Ask Me If I'm Over It Yet

*Please, don't ask me if I'm over it yet,
I'll never be over it.
Please, don't tell me she's in a better place.
She isn't with me.
Please, don't say at least she isn't suffering.
I haven't come to terms with why she had to suffer at all.
Please, don't tell me you know how I feel
Unless you have lost a child.
Please, don't ask me if I feel better.
Bereavement isn't a condition that clears up.
Please, don't tell me at least you had her for so many years.
What year would you choose for your child to die?
Please, don't tell me God never gives us more than we can bear.
Please, just tell me you are sorry.
Please, just let me talk about my child.
Please, mention my child's name.
Please, just let me cry. - Rita Moran, Bereaved Parents of U.S.A.*

SHARING

It will be our practice to share your comments with our readers, as they often benefit others. Each of us handles our grief differently, so we ask for your tolerance and understanding with compassion for the submissions presented. If you wish to submit a writing for Sharing in our next newsletter, please email it to us at moncton@TCFCanada.net .

How to Deal with the Exhaustion of Grief

"I'm tired all the time. I can barely put one foot in front of the other. Bruce is the same way. Exhaustion has become a way of life," Carla said. Carla and Bruce's sons, Blake and Barrett, were practically inseparable. Two years apart, they grew up as boys will - competing, fighting, cooperating and having great adventures together. The family lived on a large piece of land out in the country, giving the boys lots of room to roam and explore. They loved their mini-kingdom. One Saturday, the boys were out riding their ATVs. Inattention led to a loss of control and they collided. Barrett was killed instantly. Blake died a day later in the hospital. They were 13 and 15. "Life is heavy now. Last night at dinner, I was so exhausted that I could barely chew. Fatigue has taken over our lives," Carla shared.

Grief takes incredible energy

Losing a loved one is like being hit by a bus. It immobilizes us. The shock waves are immense, and roll over us again and again, relentless and debilitating. Some days, we can barely lift our heads. Chronic fatigue, even exhaustion, is a common and natural experience for those in heavy grief. We wake in the morning, and it smacks us again. They're gone. The shock stuns us. We close our eyes and sigh. We rise and attempt to do life. We drag from room to room, place to place, task to task. There is little to no heart in what we do. How could there be? Our heart is shattered and in a million pieces. We put on a mask and take it through the day. Others are aware of our pain, but don't know what to do with it. Relationships become awkward, tentative and different. At work, we go through the motions. Our performance isn't what it was. We're more irritable and erratic. We wonder what others are thinking. Perhaps we have other children. They might be grieving too. We can't handle ourselves right now, so how in the world do we love them through this? Our backs are broken. The thought of shouldering any more weight - even an ounce more - is terrifying. Numb. Dazed. Fatigued. Exhausted. Our bodies are feeling it. Grief is terribly draining. "Missing you is exhausting. I'll be patient and take my time."

Some suggestions:

Grief is incredibly demanding. Fatigue is the natural result. Here are some possible action steps to help manage this.

- Make taking care of yourself a high priority. Focus on nutrition, rest and exercise. Let these things rise to the top of your list.

- Downgrade your expectations of yourself. If you're a list person, limit each day to three things, and tackle them in order of importance, not urgency. Most of us in grief have to "do less". Pace yourself.
- Be patient with yourself. This isn't a common cold that will resolve itself in a few days. Recovery often feels slow. Time doesn't heal all wounds, but healing does take time - lots of it.

You may always grieve on some level, but the grief will change. Handle today, this hour, this moment. One moment, one baby step at a time.

- Gary Roe, Bereaved Parents of the U.S.A., Coeur d'Alene

Quiet and Solitude -- Friends or Enemies in Grief?

Let's be clear -- each person's grief journey is unique. Each person's timetable is uniquely theirs, too. However, we can point out some pitfalls and discuss certain elements that are necessary for healing. In somewhat the same way that we cannot connect with others when we are distracted, on the go, in the midst of commotion, and interacting with other people, we cannot get in touch with the deep parts of ourselves then either. To face our grief head-on, we need times of quiet and solitude.

We can't run and hide from our feelings and work through them at the same time. We must allow ourselves to feel whatever emotions our grief has produced inside of us instead of keeping our emotions tightly bottled up inside.

Early on in my grief journey, I couldn't bear silence. When I came home from work, I had to turn on the television just for the background noise whether I watched a program or not. The silence was deafening. And being by myself was easy -- in fact, I was often more comfortable alone than with people. Yet, I couldn't hide and heal from grief. One of the signals that told me I was healing was when I could come home, and in complete quiet, be comfortable.

We may experience times of anger; certainly, deep pain and sadness, denial, frustration, confusion, isolation, rejection, guilt, loneliness, doubt, emotional chaos, disbelief, and whatever else we may be feeling. I'm not suggesting that you build a house and stay there -- but I urge you to allow your feelings to surface and process them so you can release them. Feel the emotions. Writing about whatever comes to the surface helps to release those thoughts and emotions, too, and has been shown to be therapeutic.

While we have to allow times of quiet and solitude to create an atmosphere where we can begin to work through our grief, too much of a good thing is counterproductive and can be harmful.

When we're grieving, isolation is easy to fall into because it's often easier and more comfortable to be alone than to be with people. Even though we need to talk about our loss,

and it's important to allow certain people to support us through our grief, sometimes it's easier to avoid talking. Don't feel guilty about that.

Being around people when we're grieving can be draining. Sometimes other people are uncomfortable around us, so we pull back and spend too much time alone. We need both! We do need other people during grief. Grieving is too hard to try and handle completely alone.

Times of quiet and solitude, used productively, will facilitate healing. You can't face the full force of grief 24/7. Yes, it's true that you need to make time to be alone and work through your thoughts and feelings. But you also need to take breaks. Pull back from the pain, refocus, and, yes, escape for a while. By doing this, you'll restore your strength, physically and mentally, for the rest of your journey.

Judy Brizendine, The Compassionate Friends, United Kingdom.