



SEVEN PRINCIPLES

For Bereaved Parents of
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

1. TCF OFFERS FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING TO BEREAVED PARENTS.

- ♥ We have learned that the death of our child has caused a pain that can best be understood fully by another bereaved parent.
- ♥ Knowing that all need love and support, we reach out as our own grief subsides to those who still feel alone and abandoned.

2. TCF BELIEVES THAT BEREAVED PARENTS CAN HELP EACH OTHER TOWARD A POSITIVE RECONCILIATION OF THEIR GRIEF.

- ♥ We understand that each parent must find his or her own way through grief.
- ♥ We know that expressing thoughts and feelings is part of the healing process.
- ♥ We offer an opportunity for sharing and learning from other bereaved parents.
- ♥ We do not offer professional psychotherapy or counselling.
- ♥ We seek the cooperation and the support of the professional community but do not depend on it for supervision or formal guidance.
- ♥ We welcome the opportunity to share with the professional community what we have learned about the needs of bereaved parents.

3. TCF REACHES OUT TO ALL BEREAVED PARENTS ACROSS ARTIFICIAL BARRIERS OF RELIGION, RACE, ECONOMIC CLASS OR ETHNIC GROUP.

- ♥ We espouse no specific religious or philosophical ideology.
- ♥ We support our activities through voluntary contributions and assess no dues or fees.
- ♥ We do not participate in legislative or political controversy.
- ♥ We express our individual views on controversial subjects with respect and consideration for those who may disagree with us.

4. TCF UNDERSTANDS THAT EVERY BEREAVED PARENT HAS INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND RIGHTS.

- ♥ We never suggest that there is a correct way to grieve or that there is a preferred solution to the emotional and spiritual dilemmas raised by the death of our children.
- ♥ Everyone deserves an opportunity to be heard.
- ♥ No one is compelled to speak.
- ♥ All have the responsibility to listen.

5. TCF HELPS BEREAVED PARENTS PRIMARILY THROUGH LOCAL CHAPTERS.

- ♥ We have established local chapters to provide sharing groups that create an atmosphere of openness and honesty.
- ♥ We believe that local chapters should be autonomous in all matters except those affecting other chapters or the organization as a whole.
- ♥ We believe that chapters succeed most frequently if there are three or more founders, at least two of whom are a year or more from their loss and including at least one father and one mother.

6. TCF CHAPTERS BELONG TO THEIR MEMBERS.

- ♥ We treat what is said at meetings as confidential and what we learn about each other as privileged information.
- ♥ We recommend that attendance at meetings by the media, by students, or by other observers be permitted only with prior announcements and with the consent of the chapter members.
- ♥ We realize that some time must be spent on organizational programs and financial matters but we prefer to keep this to a minimum and out of the regularly scheduled TCF meetings.

7. TCF CHAPTERS ARE COORDINATED NATIONALLY TO EXTEND HELP TO EACH OTHER AND TO INDIVIDUAL BEREAVED PARENTS EVERYWHERE.

- ♥ We maintain a national office to serve us by assisting in the development of new chapters, by offering support and consultation to existing chapters, and by responding to bereaved parents where there is no local chapter.
- ♥ We have learned that it is often easier and more effective to provide program material and educational services by working together at the national or regional level than to work alone.
- ♥ We seek opportunities to share with society the insights our grief has brought us that future bereaved parents may receive needed understanding and support.
- ♥ We encourage other family members, especially siblings, to share in our task of mutual support.
- ♥ We acknowledge our responsibility to support our local and national goals by contributing what we can of our time, our talent, and our resources.



The ***SEVEN PRINCIPLES*** for bereaved parents were adopted by the USA National Board of Directors in 1981, endorsed by the National Board of The Compassionate Friends of Canada, November 2, 1986. These Principles, written by the late Art Peterson of Star Lake, NY, follow the philosophy of the original *Society of the Compassionate Friends*, founded in Coventry England January 28th, 1969 by Rev. Simon Stephens and co-founding parents, Joe and Iris Lawley MBE.