



GRIEVE HEAL GROW



The Compassionate Friends Victoria AU Magazine

Supporting Parents, Siblings and Grandparents after a Child Dies

In memory of
LINDSAY HARMER OAM
1928 – 2019



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40 Years of Compassion

24 HOUR Grief Support

Phone 9888 4944 - National Number 1300 064 068

Phones Staffed by Bereaved Parents, Siblings & Grandparents

www.tcfv.org.au





The Compassionate Friends Victoria Inc

The Compassionate Friends Victoria is part of a worldwide organisation, which was founded in England in 1969 and established in Victoria in 1978. It is a mutual assistance, self-help organisation offering friendship and understanding to families following the death of a child, sibling & grandchild of any age and from any cause. The primary purpose is to assist them in the rebuilding of their lives after the death of their child, sibling & grandchild and to support their efforts to achieve, emotional and mental health.

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TCFV Victoria Membership

Being a member of The Compassionate Friends Victoria (TCFV) enables you to access many vital support services and attend social activities whilst demonstrating your support for a society that is aware and understands the impact of grief and bereavement following the death of a child, sibling or grandchild.

TCFV Membership is now open to both the bereaved and non-bereaved. Following an initial complimentary membership period, bereaved members have the option to remain

- Full Member (\$55 pa incl GST) or
- limited Keep In Touch Membership (\$22 pa incl GST).

Associate membership is open to any non-bereaved individual or organisation who knows about our important work and wants to show their support in a meaningful way. The non-bereaved membership levels include

- Associate Individual (\$55 pa incl GST) or
- Associate Organisation (\$110 pa incl GST).

The full details about all our different membership levels and their benefits can be found in the new Membership section of our website www.tcfv.org.au/getinvolved/membership
If you have any questions about TCFV membership, please call our office on 03 9888 4034.

**Front cover Photo Reverend Canon Simon Stephens,
Co Founders - Margaret OAM & Lindsay Harmer OAM 4/12/1928 - 24/5/2019**

24 HOUR Grief Support - Available on Telephone 03 9888 4944 / 1300 064 068
Bereaved Drop In Centre Hours 9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday

Disclaimer: Unless expressly stated, the views expressed in articles, poetry etc. in this magazine are not necessarily the views of TCFV Board staff or the editorial team. The editor reserves the right to edit any contribution. Permission is given to Editors & Chapter Leaders of The Compassionate Friends to reprint material from the magazine. We request that credit be given to the author & their TCF Chapter.

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Notice Board

contributions to the next magazine...

If you would like to contribute a Love Gift, article or letter for the magazine, please submit the written piece by the 1st of January, March, May, July, September, November for inclusion in the following magazine.

While we do have set themes for each edition, these make up only a small part of the magazine. Poetry, artwork and stories about your grandchild, child or sibling are needed for every edition.

We also look for photos / artwork you have done for our front page.

October / November: Suicide
August / September: Returning to work / Fathers Day

You can send via mail to:
The Editor, TCF, PO Box 171, Canterbury, Vic, 3126.
or email jennyg@tcfv.org.au



WINTER SOLSTICE GATHERING

In olden times, the Winter Solstice was a time of reflection and welcoming the return of the light.

Join us at the Centre on Friday, June 21
and find light and hope out of the darkness.

Food/Mulled Wine/Toasted Marshmallows/Hot Chocolate

Fire Release Ceremony

Music & Readings

5.30pm to 9.00 pm

Register at www.tcfv.org.au/winter

From the CEO

Dear Friends

My report this month is a mixture of sad news and some good news.

As Andrew mentioned in his report, Lindsay Harmer OAM died in May. I along with many other TCF people, attended the funeral. (You will see excerpts from the service in this magazine.) It was a beautiful service that befitted the humble, wise and very dedicated man that he was.

His daughter delivered a eulogy that was both insightful and humorous. His grandchildren each told a story about their relationship with Lindsay. How fortunate they are! After the service, I chatted with several people who had benefited from being original members of TCF. I heard several times: "I would not be here if wasn't for TCF." I have also heard that on many occasions in my short time here. It just reinforced how critical it is that we nurture and grow the concept launched by the Harmers in Australia over 40 years ago. Mutual support using the lived experience of volunteers (that is, people who get it), is just so critical to TCF.

Today (5 June), we received notification from TCFUK, that one of their founding parents, Joan Henderson has died. Joan was instrumental in establishing the fledgling charity and sourced funds through knitting items, while her husband sold decorative bottles! Joan also had an enormous impact on many, many families through her work with TCF and her influence – just like the Harmers', will continue well into the future.

On a positive note, Sean Bell who is running around Australia (Jog for Joey) to raise funds and awareness for TCF and in memory of his friend Joey Moschetti, recently ran an ultramarathon in Bali. It was 80k's! Sean won the marathon! (You might remember he ran 50 marathons in 50 days earlier this year!) Sean is planning to run a 24-hour marathon in July....more on that later. (I'm puffed even typing this paragraph.)

Lastly, the theme for the magazine is anxiety and depression. They are two concepts I do get. If you feel that you are suffering from them in any way, please talk to someone. You will only benefit.

John Sedunary
Chief Executive Officer

President Report

Dear Friends

How much of the time have you felt difficulty in talking to people openly about your grief?

There can be so many reasons. We feel they're not listening, they don't seem to care or we feel they'll treat our grief inappropriately. Often we feel that people don't understand.

It is no wonder that so many of us feel comfortable and comforted at The Compassionate Friends, where there are others who feel the same way having been through a similar experience. They get it. Of course, this is precisely why Margaret and Lindsay Harmer OAM founded our wonderful organisation. And it is why we have not strayed from their original intent 41 years ago of providing support to others similarly bereaved by the loss of a child. But it's not always that easy. Many of us who are members of The Compassionate Friends have additional problems that can be difficult to talk about. One of these is our mental health and it's likely that many of us have problems in this area.

It's often said that one in five Australians have a mental health issue and that trauma, anxiety and depression are most common. These might be conditions that existed before our terrible loss but many of us are traumatised by our loss, quite a few of us get secondary depression from our grief and our anxieties are added to as we face a world which looks so different because of our grief.

So, mental health issues are likely to be common amongst our members and we need support for our whole load of suffering, not just for the grief part of it.

I note with great sadness the passing of Lindsay Harmer OAM on the 24th of May. Lindsay and his wife Margaret, were the founders of TCF Australia and were instrumental in opening TCF Chapters across Australia. You will see an article telling some of Lindsay's life story in this magazine.

On behalf of all members, past, present and future, I sincerely thank Lindsay for his work and offer Margaret and the Harmer family our heartfelt condolences.

Andrew Weatherhead
TCFV President
Bereaved father of Max (aged 26)
Bereaved brother of Caroline (aged 62)

Editorial

Hi All

The magazine has been a big part of my job for the last few years and even more so after Deb Gates stepped down as Editor. So, since then I had been doing the magazine with the help of the Editorial team, but I am pleased to say we have a new Editor, Russell Miles, a bereaved father of Nick aged 22. Russell and I will be working together on the next couple of magazines and then it will be over to him (with me helping in the back group only). I am sure you will see over the next few months some of the ideas Russell has and we hope to make the magazine more interactive. Stay tuned.

We are also saying goodbye to one of our long-term members of the Editorial team, Pat Burns. She has been a very big part of the team for so long, seen December 2010. She has written many stories of her grief journey, how she has survived and how her grief has changed over the years and after the loss of her son Darren aged 31 in 1997. We would like to say a very big Thank-You

and hope that you will still write for the magazine from time to time. Pat has not given up all her volunteering roles at TCFV, so you will still see her around the centre or at some events.

I am sorry this magazine is so late, but we had to hold it back to pay honour to Lindsay and then Joan from the UK too. After it is finished, it still takes about 3 weeks to get it out to you. But I hope that you will get some comfort out of it and even some help and support from the many stories.

The next magazines theme is Returning to Work and Father's Day, so we would love it if you would like to write something on either topic and then emailing to jennyg@tcfv.org.au

Take care till next time
Jenny Galati
Bereaved mother of Danielle (16)

Help provide hope for
grieving families



The Compassionate Friends Victoria - End of Financial Year Appeal

We are launching our 2019 End of Financial Year Appeal.
Our goal for this campaign is to raise \$10,000 by June 30th.

If we raise \$10,000, we'll be able to better support those grieving throughout rural and regional Victoria, who for geographic, family or emotional reasons are unable to access information and supports. We want to develop a range of online video information resources for them as well as provide local face to face group or individualised support. We want them to be able to access social and emotional support from others who have similar experiences of grief and bereavement following the death of their child.

We could support more regional Victorian families this coming year.
But we need your help to make this happen.....

Are you able to make a special year end donation of \$100, \$250 or whatever you can afford to help us meet our goal? We won't be able to do it without you. Your support will make a genuine and lifelong impact for those who are trying to process and understand their grief.

To donate, please visit: www.tcfv.org.au/tax-appeal

Please note that all donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

With gratitude

Danny Bendel
TCFV Treasurer



Lindsay Harmer Co-Founder 4/12/1928 – 24/05/2019

Lindsay Norman Harmer, with his wife Margaret Eva Harmer, has excelled by founding in 1978, and then co-convening for many years, The Compassionate Friends (TCF), the first bereaved parents' and sibling support group in Australia.

Lindsay Harmer turned the personal grief and devastation of losing his only beloved son Rhys, aged 11, the family blameless victims in a drink driving car accident in 1973, into an extraordinary vision and commitment to raise community awareness and to help and support parents and siblings going through similar grief.

After Rhys's death, Lindsay and Margaret tried to cope with the grief as well as caring for their two teenage daughters and run their busy pharmacy. They found that there was no dedicated professional group or community organisation that understood the grief or trauma of bereaved parents.

Compared to our current more enlightened times, Lindsay and Margaret suffered their loss at a time when such grief and personal trauma was not well understood or recognised in the community. Expectations in the 1970's were commonly that grief should be short and best not to be dwelled upon, photos put away lest they upset, funerals not attended by siblings for the same reason, deceased babies not named and children not viewed or if they were, without a parent being provided support by loving family or friends or an empathetic professional at the morgue. Road deaths from drink driving were numerous and still largely unquestioned, doctor patient communication often lacked emotional sensitivity and a holistic view of the patient and family, post-traumatic stress disorder was not recognised, SIDS was still not understood, pools were still unfenced and deaths by suicide were frequently hidden. Sibling grief went unnoticed, males were expected to be strong, unemotional and never cry, couples where both partners were in crisis were still expected to support each other solely without knowledge of the grieving process, individual differences or having skilled bereavement therapists to turn to when the relationship faltered which they did for high numbers of bereaved parents.

He had the gift of insight and for connecting deeply. He too had experienced strong emotions such as anger and guilt and understood they were often part of the process to healing and needed to be heard, respected and worked through. In all these ways, Lindsay helped many hundreds of people to heal in their own personal way and find the strength to move on with their lives.

Lindsay also advocated on behalf of the bereaved, participating in self-help forums, speaking often to media, to professionals, challenging expectations of bereavement, helping raise awareness of grieving, of what grief experiences commonly shared but also the uniqueness of each bereavement. He sought for the community and for professionals in the field to better understand the mourning process and to work together to assist this often-devastated group of people.

When I was a young junior medical resident doing a rotation in Psychiatry in 1980, I was talking with the Department head of Psychiatry, Professor Brian Davies at my hospital, the Royal Melbourne about Lindsay and his work. Professor Davies agreed that it was not a well-understood or appreciated field at the time and he invited Lindsay to give an address at the Royal Melbourne to all the psychiatrists and trainees. He and others said to me later that they found it profoundly inspiring and enlightening and that it had increased their insights and thinking about grief and post-traumatic stress, at a time when both were poorly recognised or understood. Following the first meeting in 1978, Lindsay and Margaret continued to run regular meetings for bereaved parents in their lounge room but as they spread the concept and availability of the group's support and their work received a lot of national newspaper, television and radio publicity (documented on the enclosed official timeline and by the large collection of newspaper articles enclosed), the numbers grew rapidly and they started to convene the regular 'Friendship meetings' in a large city hall that they hired.

By now Lindsay was replying to 1000 letters and 3000 phone calls per year.

In the 1980s, Lindsay and Margaret funded themselves to travel to international meetings of the worldwide Compassionate Friends in the USA where they were invited to give keynote addresses. They established many lasting and beneficial links with various chapters of TCF in USA and Canada and those links continue today. Examples of letters enclosed attest to their contributions and the links they established in North America.

There came a time when TCF membership was so large that it was decided to give extra support to bereaved parents in special subgroups formed by the manner in which a child had died e.g. a chronic illness group, a sudden infant death group ("SIDS" had not yet begun) a suicide group, and road and other sudden trauma group. It was recognised

that each subgroup had its own experiences and unique shared issues to resolve and this provided additional safe and sensitive meeting groups which were well accepted. In 1991, after 13 years of full-time dedicated work, Lindsay and Margaret decided that having brought TCF to Australia and having seen it firmly established, it was their time to move on and hand over the leadership of the organisation to the next generation.

Since then TCF has continued to grow locally in Victoria and nationally and has become established as a major support organisation for bereaved parents in Australia. TCF is now a thriving self-help organisation with many city and regional chapters throughout the country. They helped to pioneer the concept of 'self-help' and 'peer-to-peer' support, a movement that has helped support and empower individuals affected by difficult challenging and/or unjust experiences whilst simultaneously raising awareness of their issues in the community e.g. like other groups such as returning war veterans, children removed from their parents and survivors of domestic abuse to name just a few.

In a world when we sometimes struggle to recognise who are the true heroes in our society, I believe that Lindsay and Margaret Harmer are truly great Australians and are two people of whom our nation can be justly proud. Australia is now a better, more understanding and more compassionate nation because of the work of Lindsay and Margaret Harmer.

Dr Ian Haines
Medical Oncologist and Palliative Care Physician,
Cabrini Health, Malvern
Associate Professor of Medicine, Monash University



Joan Henderson - TCF UK

Dear Friends

It is with great sorrow that I write to tell you that Joan Henderson passed away, peacefully, on the 3rd June in her 90th year.

Most of you will know that Joan was one of the very small group who formed this Charity 50 years ago and it is through her courage, compassion and vision that we are able to offer comfort and solace to those who have suffered the worst loss imaginable.

I did not have the honour of meeting Joan, but I have had cause to reflect often on the strength it must have taken to embark on the creation of this organisation. I have been full of admiration for her fortitude and strength.

I hope her family will have some comfort in knowing that Joan Henderson has left a huge legacy by helping to form The Compassionate Friends. All of us, around the globe, who receive support from this organisation, owe her a debt of gratitude. We will treasure her memory and that of her husband Bill and their beautiful 11 year old Billy for generations to come.

Our CEO, Carolyn Brice, all the Trustees (past and present), the staff and all the volunteers join me in offering my deepest and heart-felt condolences to the Henderson family for their loss.

Maria Ahern
Chair of Trustees
The Compassionate Friends UK
4th June 2019



Grief vs. Depression: Which Is It?

Nancy Schimelpfening

21st August 2018

<https://www.verywellmind.com/grief-and-depression-1067237>

Grief and depression share similar symptoms, but each is a distinct experience, and making the distinction is important for several reasons. With depression, getting a diagnosis and seeking treatment can be literally life saving. At the same time, experiencing grief due to a significant loss is not only normal but can ultimately be very healing.

Clinical Perspectives

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders recognises that while grief and major depressive disorder are distinct, they can also coexist, and grief can sometimes trigger a major depressive episode, just as other stressful experiences can.

Studies have shown that the extreme stress associated with grief can also trigger medical illnesses—such as heart disease, cancer, and the common cold—as well as psychiatric disorders like depression and anxiety.

Comparisons

Giving this overlap, there are times when it may be tricky to distinguish between grief and depression. A better understanding of their similarities and differences can help.

Similarities

Grief has several symptoms in common with the symptoms of major depressive disorder, including:

- Intense sadness
- Insomnia
- Poor appetite
- Weight loss

Grief can also develop into complicated grief, which, unlike uncomplicated grief, does not seem to dissipate with time and can look a lot like depression. Symptoms of complicated or chronic grief may include:

- Intense sadness
- Anger
- Irritability
- Difficulty accepting that whatever caused the grief really occurred
- Excessive focus on the episode of grief or avoidance of it altogether

In extreme cases, someone with complicated grief may engage in self-destructive behaviours or even contemplate or attempt suicide.

Differences

Where grief and depression differ is that grief tends to decrease over time and occurs in waves that are triggered

by thoughts or reminders of its cause. In other words, the person may feel relatively better while in certain situations, such as when friends and family are around to support them. But triggers, like a deceased loved one's birthday or going to a wedding after having finalised a divorce, could cause the feelings to resurface more strongly.

Depression, on the other hand, tends to be more persistent and pervasive. An exception to this would be atypical depression, in which positive events can bring about an improvement in mood. A person with atypical depression, however, tends to exhibit symptoms that are the opposite of those commonly experienced with grief, such as sleeping excessively, eating more, and gaining weight.

Other clues that point to a major depressive disorder instead of grief include:

- Feelings of guilt not related to what prompted the grief
- Thoughts of suicide—although, in grief, there can be thoughts of “joining” the deceased
- Morbid preoccupation with worthlessness (grief does not usually erode self-confidence)
- Sluggishness or hesitant and confused speech
- Prolonged and marked difficulty in carrying out the activities of day-to-day living
- Hallucinations and delusions; however, some people experiencing grief may have the sensation of seeing or hearing things

Treatment

While grief can be extremely painful, there is generally no medical indication to treat it. Some exceptions include:

- If grief-related anxiety is so severe that it interferes with daily life, anti-anxiety medication may be helpful.
- If the person is experiencing sleep problems, short-term use of prescription sleep aids may be helpful.

If you meet the diagnostic criteria for major depressive disorder, antidepressants may be prescribed. In both cases, psychotherapy can be greatly beneficial in helping you process what you are feeling and learn strategies that can help you cope.

If you are wondering if you are experiencing grief or depression it is important to talk to your doctor and/or therapist who can help you make the distinction.

Grief is our body's way of working through difficult and traumatic experiences. Talk openly with a therapist or someone you trust, and remember that grief is not a sign of weakness. Likewise, depression is an illness like any other. Reaching out for help when you experience depression symptoms is a sign of strength and can help get you on the road to effective treatment.

Words to Hold Onto

When my brother passed away, I experienced anxiety. It felt like a part of my identity had been taken away and the natural assurance of having a sibling to confide in and share inside jokes with had gone. Remembering how much he encouraged me to try new things in life and some of the constructive advice he gave me helped bring back strength.

Words of kindness or poignant phrases can be helpful to hold onto when you have lost a loved one. Here are a few positive quotes and suggestions from different people, including my dear Grandmother, shared with me that might instill hope in you, too:

“The love you have for them will always live on, as love never dies.”

“Even though their time on earth was brief, you were lucky to have been blessed with their years of presence.”

“Their legacy will remain forever as long as you continue to talk about them, share their stories and do the things they enjoyed.”

“Think about all of the things they taught you and things they did which inspire you today.”

“Remember the good times and keep a notebook of funny or uplifting occasions.”

“Live life to the fullest as they would want you to be happy”

“Grief does not have a time limit.”

Grief and the low feelings it brings can be overbearing and make you feel isolated. Try remembering a pleasant saying or go out and do something that would make them proud to lift your spirits.

Harriet Clegg

Bereaved Sister of Oliver Clegg (31)

TCFV



The poster is for a support group for bereaved siblings. It features a circular logo on the top left with the text 'T.C.F.V. Grieve Heal Grow' and an illustration of a person standing between two hands. The main title is 'A Support Group for BEREAVED SIBLINGS' in a large, elegant serif font. Below the title, it says 'Based in BENDIGO.' There is a large, detailed illustration of a butterfly in the center. To the right of the butterfly, there is a block of text: 'Our TCFV support group provides bereaved brothers and sisters the opportunity to meet in a safe environment with other bereaved siblings who have "been there". A chance to talk about our grief, how we've been going, and the legacy of our siblings in our lives.' Below this, it says 'When: we meet the third Monday of the month at 6pm. (Upcoming meetings: 17 June, 15 July, 19 August, 16 September)'. Further down, it says 'For meeting information/details of venue and to speak with the local group leader, please contact The Gianna Centre on 0419 496 443.' At the bottom left, there is a logo for 'The Gianna Centre' with a dragonfly and the text 'Our partnering organisation in Bendigo: www.gianna.org.au'. At the bottom right, there is the 'VICTORIA State Government' logo.

A Support Group for BEREAVED SIBLINGS

Based in BENDIGO.

Our TCFV support group provides bereaved brothers and sisters the opportunity to meet in a safe environment with other bereaved siblings who have "been there". A chance to talk about our grief, how we've been going, and the legacy of our siblings in our lives.

When: we meet the third Monday of the month at 6pm.
(Upcoming meetings: 17 June, 15 July, 19 August, 16 September)

For meeting information/details of venue and to speak with the local group leader, please contact
The Gianna Centre on 0419 496 443.

Our partnering organisation in Bendigo:
The Gianna Centre
www.gianna.org.au

VICTORIA
State Government

The Power of Peer Support

There are a range of types of support available to bereaved people. The core type of support that The Compassionate Friends (TCF) offers is Peer Support, and the aim of the following is to "walk around" just what this concept of Peer Support is.

1. Our Belief about Peer Support

We – TCF – believe that one of the most powerful avenues of support is peer support or mutual support, where those offering the support have experienced a similar loss/ bereavement to those who are receiving the support.

It could be argued that it is perhaps the most powerful support, when added to support from family and friends, for what might be called "normal" loss/ bereavement (which covers probably 95% of loss/ bereavement situations).

Furthermore, we believe that what drives the incredible power of peer support is the universally expressed need that bereaved people have:

(1) Firstly, for accurate empathic understanding of the intensity of their feelings, and

(2) Secondly, for accurate empathic understanding of the magnitude and complexity of the issues they are facing in rebuilding their lives.

2. The Peer-Support Family

TCF belongs to a special group of "official" support organisations, and "unofficial" support groups (such as a group of widowers formed out of a Probus club), where the main support avenue is the provision of Peer Support. Some of the "official" peer-based support organisations have come together to develop a "Charter of Peer Support" document. (See link at conclusion of this article.)

3. Peer Support in the TCF Context

Peer support – or Mutual Support – in the TCF context means two particular focuses:

(1) Firstly, TCF's main energy is devoted to bereaved parents or siblings or grandparents offering support to other bereaved parents or siblings or grandparents (with the belief that with a similar shared experience, there will be greater understanding of each other's world).

(2) Secondly, the TCF charter stipulates that ALL facilitators or leaders of TCF support programs MUST be bereaved parents or siblings. It is worth reminding ourselves that this requirement means the TCF organisation being constantly aware that this adds an extra layer of vulnerability to leadership or facilitation of TCF programs, which in turn means greater vigilance of the welfare of leaders, and having strong support processes in place.

4. Research Evidence on the Benefits of Peer Support

WE believe/know from our own experiences that peer support is incredibly powerful. The research community does tend to say this is "not solid research evidence". To us this is "strong anecdotal evidence" of the power of the shared experience – perhaps the most powerful means of support for those experiencing what might be called "normal" loss and bereavement experiences. The Charter of Peer Support document (p.7) supports us when it points to the wealth of what they call "strong anecdotal evidence" from participants of peer support groups of the benefits that this type of support offers.

5. Review of the Benefits of Peer Support

It is worth reviewing these briefly, because these are the reasons we, as TCF volunteers can unapologetically, assertively and confidently sit with and listen to and share with other bereaved people, and know that we are offering help that can work.

As we know, for many bereaved people the sharing of their experiences is all that is needed to 'kick-start' the process of re-building their shattered lives. This list of benefits of peer support reflects the benefits listed in "The Charter of Peer Support" document, and we who have attended TCF support groups will recognise them immediately.

Jon Stebbins
TCFV

The Power of Peer Support Cont.

Good Peer Support:

- a. Provides access to help which maintains personal autonomy, is easily accessible, and affordable, and can complement existing clinical services
- b. Provides access to collective wisdom & multiple perspectives
- c. Provides opportunities to understand and destigmatise aspects of bereavement (eg Suicide; mental illness / disabilities)
- d. Provides access to a community of care
- e. Leads to increased self-esteem & activation of personal resources
- f. Provides better decision-making skills
- g. Enables improved social functioning
- h. Can lead to decreased psychiatric symptoms (ie decreased rates or lengths of hospitalisation)
- i. Leads to lower rates of isolation
- j. Leads to larger social networks
- k. Can lead to increased support seeking
- l. Can lead to greater pursuit of educational goals and employment
- m. Leads to a sense of hope & inspiration
- n. Provides the opportunity to help others

Source: Charter of Peer Support, 2017 revision
Link: <http://www.peersupportvic.org/index.php/2014-12-15-22-41-32/2014-12-15-22-46-46>

Depression - Nonclinical often confused with an overwhelming sadness

I have found on retrospective thinking that not getting over-tired, not putting myself into uncomfortable positions, (often very difficult as it can change the dynamics of the family unit) and how much time I choose to spend with others, often breaking habits and traditions that meant a lot to other people, conserving my energy and learning to accept small acts of kindness from others.

It took me a very long time to understand the "look after yourself" that people so easily gave as advice.

Eating well (again difficult and challenging) I think I fell for Bakers delight bread, making toast with butter as my stable diet for close to two years.

Assistance: Always having a bottle of water handy to take a sip or gulp - hydrate the nerves (physical action to distract the mind)

Cut back to basic living protect your energy levels

Took a day off work as a (Mental health day) without feeling guilty.

Behaviour of others is not something another person needs to own.

Get up, dress up and show up, tough words but helped sometimes

Look at nature, green grass, blue sky, night stars, warmth no one can take that away from a human being.

Sadly, it is what it is and nothing I do will change the situation.

Celebrate being an individual

Finally, a poem that may have come from the CF group and changed to suit

Anne Hern
TCFV
Mother of James (26)

Greensborough TCFV Group News

Hello bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. My name is Amanda and together with Liz (and semi-retired Sandra) we facilitate the Greensborough TCF Group Meetings. We all are bereaved mothers and have undergone Leadership Training through TCFV.

Have you ever attended a support meeting? Maybe it sounds a bit 'too heavy' for you. Maybe you would like to go but feel too 'nervous.' Some bereaved members do have their reservations but then decide to try out a meeting 4 or 5 years into their grief journey. This is absolutely fine! There are no rules or expectations. Anything is permissible. Some come to every meeting. Others come sporadically.

To be honest, it can be very sad at times and even 'confronting' to hear other bereaved people sharing their personal tragedies. It can also be very TOUCHING to know that these individuals trust the people in the Group, to be privy to personal information about their lives. However, it is also so much more than this. The positives for me personally, certainly outnumbered perceived or actual 'negatives.'

This is what I have gotten out of attending TCF meetings for over 7 years now.

1. Deep, meaningful conversations with other bereaved parents to whom I feel connected.
2. Witnessing of genuine acts of kindness, comfort, inspiration and hope.
3. Constant emotional support and friendship.
4. Access to a safe, warm welcoming environment, every month, where i can be assured confidentiality and no judgement.
5. A place to laugh, cry, learn, grow and bond with the only people who truly 'get it.'

At Greensborough TCF Group Meetings, for the last few months, instead of having an open-ended sharing, we now have 'topics of discussion.' This is working really well for our Group. We are flexible too and always attend to the needs of individuals who may need to share other matters.

In the last two months we covered the topics; 'Secondary losses after losing your child.' eg family relations, career, sense of identity, physical and mental health, loss of friends etc.

Last month we had a fun topic. Members brought in examples of 'Tributes to their child.' This included photos of special gardens, displays, memorial jewellery, photo albums, etc.

Please see our photos.

Warmly

Amanda Presland
Bereaved mother
Samuel. (23)
TCFV



Cyprus- Small Shrines of Remembrance

My son and I recently visited Cyprus, the place where my father was born. I'd been to Cyprus on an extended family holiday many years ago, but our son hadn't been before, so it was a delightful thing to do together. Cyprus is a small island nation that is a mixture of both the contemporary and traditional; a blend of modern-day lifestyle, but which still retains much of its ancient, unique culture, customs and way of life.

Everyone in Australia is familiar with the roadside memorials of flowers and sometimes a cross left by families and friends at the site of accidents where a loved one or loved ones have died. Travelling throughout Cyprus you soon become aware that they also have their own distinct way of remembering departed loved ones. As you drive around the island you see many lovely small memorials beside roads, on cliffs or beaches at the site of a loved one's death. But these memorials are little model buildings, usually like miniature churches. They are pretty shrines built by families in remembrance of a beloved family member who has died, in a car accident, drowning or other tragedy. But sometimes these are also erected by someone who had a near death experience and are built as thanks to their guardian angel (or saint) for saving their life. These decorative shrines as well serve as a warning to others to be careful on the roads, in the water and so on.

The shrines are most often painted, have inscriptions on them, with names and dates and usually have a cross on top and several small icons of saints, a burning oil lamp or lit candle, a bottle with lamp oil in it and sometimes flowers in or around them. Families and friends of those lost or saved visit regularly to look after the shrine, but strangers also keep the candles or lamps alight, or relight them if they go out.

These memorial shrines are created with great love and devotion and lovingly cared for in remembrance of dead loved ones or to say thank you from those who almost died. Many are very old, tended over generations. They are a place of quiet reflection or prayer, to remember lives lost or to be grateful for being alive. The shrines represent the perpetual bonds of love between the living and the dead and remind us to bear in mind a deep appreciation of the life we have been given.

Whenever we came across these enchanting small shrines we would usually stop to look at them and silently ponder for a few moments. In one instance, we were driving in the mountains when we stopped and got out of the car to look at a shrine on a high hill overlooking a picturesque village. I saw an elderly man getting into a car parked in front of us looking. He smiled and waved and we did the same. I think he had just visited to tidy the shrine. He seemed very pleased that we were visiting the shrine. It felt like our hearts shared a link in that moment.

The little shrines are beautiful, simple structures and also very evocative and touching. I always found them to be incredibly meditative spots and was deeply moved each time we stopped at a shrine. They are such modest, but exceptionally meaningful and stirring expressions of loss and grief.

Steven Katsineris
Father of Chione (6) TCFV



Am I depressed or just grieving?

Am I depressed or just grieving?

I left the hospice the afternoon Joseph died in a complete daze. I can't remember what I did next. Probably something entirely ordinary and practical, but my purpose in life changed that day and I no longer knew who I was. Over the previous year, I had reacted to everything that was happening and now there was nothing else to do – except get through the next few days, one of which I dreaded so much I wasn't sure I could keep one foot following the other.

Fast forward a few weeks and it's a Saturday morning. No work today and the house is quiet. I am wondering what to do. I look out at my garden and I consider if I am well enough to spend time out in the cold tidying up and checking on my plants. A little note sounds in my brain "You're not ill". I shake myself and in amazement I realise I have been thinking of myself as a convalescent. My body is strong, but my self is in a weakened state. I am not entirely well.

I am not depressed. I know because I have been depressed; at least, I know I am not suffering depression in the same way as I have in the past. Back then, I was in a dark hole, unable to see a way out. Grasping for meaning and light and finding only disappointment and derision. Now I am experiencing life with a new lens as if I were suddenly blind - suddenly sighted. Eyes opened to pain like never before, loss like never before, immense gratitude for what remained and icy cold awareness of the immutable fact of his death for all time.

Depression creeps up and takes over; bereavement is thrust upon you

Depression tells you 'you are worthless'; bereavement tells you 'life matters!'

Depression shouts down the care you are shown; bereavement alerts you to love and consideration

I feared depression would come back because I was so sad, so bereft. There was one day when I felt as if meaning was hard to find. It didn't last, thankfully. In the first months especially, I was receiving many messages of

love and care and looking out for ways to express my grief. I was paying attention to it. The yawning gap in my heart could not be changed but I read about grief as a journey and I travelled a little each day since this is now my journey.

I felt I had a responsibility to go along this harsh and lonely road. The fact of Joseph's life and death made me determined to accept grief and go with it, not try to cover it up or hide from it. And I am not alone entirely. I had compassionate leave from work and that helped me feel supported. All around me, it was demonstrated that the death of a loved one is a special event and having my loss acknowledged gave me permission to be bereaved. These things kept me from depression.

Anxiety came to visit me, though. I believe anxiety is an expression of depression and knowing that made me get more anxious about being anxious! It is a vicious cycle, as you will know. I talked myself through many situations, using my 'calm, adult self' to gently soothe my uptight, ragged self when it was at the forefront. I learnt this strategy from the counsellor I was seeing. It got me to work and back, but I was often a wreck due to the energy required to keep the anxiety in check. One day, way too soon after Joseph's death, I had to fly to a conference. I had decided it was worth it but when I got to the airport for a short flight to the city the conference was in, I discovered then what it is like for the members of my family who dislike flying. I could not tell if I was in the right part of the airport; I couldn't read the time nor decipher the information on the departure board; I had no idea what I should do and wished I wasn't going. I rang my husband and he talked me through those hurdles and in a few more minutes I was able to locate my gate, order a coffee and watch the departures information board. While away, I decided to turn down an opportunity to visit my brother because my level of anxiety was rising.

The takeaway for me was that I had taken my self-care seriously and that it pays off. I returned from that trip knowing I had made the right decision and proud of myself for taking the steps I needed to be well even though it meant missing out on seeing my brother.

Am I depressed or just grieving? Cont

The period of anxiety was intense and quite short – two or three months. During this time, I tried to maintain my 'grief program', listening to Joseph's music, talking about him and not expecting too much of myself. Eventually I learnt to listen to myself and to be aware of what that feeling of anxiety was drawing attention to and then to pay attention. For me, that was the key to coming out of that period and remaining well.

The feeling of being immersed in grief subsides slowly and little by little I can expect more of myself, knowing to change the program if I start experiencing anxiety or helplessness. Looking back at the months when I was utterly overwhelmed with grief, the words and actions that stand out as most comforting were from those who have experienced similar loss, people who took the time to ask me how I was, and hugs.

Charlotte Clements
Bereaved mother of Joseph (35)
TCFV



Poem for Gramps

Adapted by his grandson Cameron Haines for Lindsay Harmer

Do not stand at my grave and weep.

I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am the fresh rain on a Dookie farmer's crop.

I am the glinting sunlight on Shoreham's cliff top.

I am the ointment on your grazed knee.

On the agapanthus, I am the spirited buzzing bee.

The sound of silence on a morning stroll.

I am the solace inside your soul.

The throttling engine of a John Deere mowing the lawn.

I am the birds singing at dawn.

A wise young owl swooping through the dark.

I am the flowers at Jell's Park.

Do not stand at my grave and cry.

I am not there. I did not die.



Walk to Remember 2019



Walk to Remember 2019 Cont.

It was a beautiful, crisp Autumn morning for our bereaved families as they set out on our annual Walk to Remember. This year brought a change of venue to Princes Park, so there was the element of the unknown for everyone who attended – those who have been on the Walk previously as well as first time attendees.

It can be overwhelming when you're grieving to travel somewhere new, to meet and connect with strangers or simply not knowing what to expect. So, it was heart-warming to see nearly 150 people come together to walk in memory of their loved one.

Once again, the Victorian United Firefighters Union came to assist on the day, cooking the BBQ and providing marshals guiding walkers on their way. This year, we were lucky enough to have a couple of fire trucks on site, much to the delight of the young children attending who were shown through the truck. Chapter House also provided us with volunteer marshals to support our families.

Everyone set off on the walk and the beautiful old trees with the sun filtering through the leaves soon eased the anxiety. The chatter of conversations could be heard as people began to talk to the people walking beside them, sharing their stories.

Towards the end, a small ceremony was held at a peaceful ornamental lake before several doves were released and quickly disappeared in the wind.

As a special memorial tribute, the outline of a butterfly was painted on the grass and everyone was invited to place their flower inside the outline to create a beautiful floral image. TCFV had been granted permission to leave the floral image along with a sign explaining its significance for 24 hours to be seen by everyone passing by.

With the official part of the day complete, people were able to enjoy a BBQ lunch. You could see picnic blankets and chairs set up, with families enjoying the sunshine and connections they had made on the walk.

It was a very special day and we hope that all our families consider joining us at Princes Park in 2020.

The Walk to Remember is one of the largest events we hold for our bereaved families. This day wouldn't be possible without the generous support of our sponsors:



CHAPTER HOUSE



The following donations were made:

The Jones family in memory of **Mark** Jones (23)

The Kaur family in memory of **Rehmat** Sandhu (21)

The Cabral family in memory of **Jessica** Cabral (15)

The Galati family in memory of **Danielle** Galati (16)

The Theobald family in memory of **Kelly** Theobald (27)

The Heane family in memory of **Cassie** Heane (31)

The Russell family in memory of **Renee** Russell (24)

The Bird family in memory of **Damien** Bird (30)

The Mason family in memory of **Jake** Mason (14)

The Bendel family in memory of **Joshua** Bendel (19)

The Lakin family in memory of **Christopher** Lakin (45)

The Atkin family in memory of **Peter** Atkin (30)

The Bate family in memory of **Taylor** May Bate (17)

The Taplin family in memory of **Simon** Taplin (32)

The Tan family in memory of **Julianna** Tan (17)

The A & D factor!

Anxiety and Depression is what I mean.

Talking about anxiety and depression is taboo in most conversations but actually having it is heavy and life changing. For me, like most things I need to understand the differences between the two as it's a bit more difficult than saying "you have anxiety," or "you have depression" because I found out it's possible to have combinations of both. Many types of mental illness may cross over into whichever condition you have as there are numerous similar causes and issues.

Anxiety, everyone feels anxious at times, and a certain level of anxiety is both normal and even helpful in some situations. Anxiety is our body's way of keeping us safe. For example, imagine you're walking home, and you're dragging your feet because you're tired. Out of the corner of your eye, you think you see a snake. Suddenly, you forget how tired you are and have a burst of energy that helps you to get away. No need to state the obvious that this anxiety is helpful. When we're constantly very anxious, we have intense feelings of worry or distress that are not easy to control. Anxiety can interfere with how we go about our everyday lives and make it hard to cope with 'normal' challenges. Some of my symptoms have been fast heartbeat, rapid breathing, rumbling in my stomach, excessive worry, trouble concentrating, irritability, a 'burst' of energy and even rashes. I once had shingles for 3 weeks on my face and head due to my grief and anxiety. Basically, anxiety is the body's physical response to fear.

Some more symptoms of my anxiety have been apprehension over what's about to happen and what could happen in the future. Worried thoughts, or a belief that something could go wrong. Feeling like you need to run away or avoid things that could cause further anxiety. A trigger for me is that I get ambushed...a lot. Ambushing is where something will either get mentioned on TV or radio or I will see something in the street, and it makes me have to think about the reality of Lauren-Kay's tragedy when it wasn't in immediate thinking. Ambushing also when I hear about any teenage death especially involving a motor vehicle, the pain and anxiety comes back in a rush!! Linking to anxiety is obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and is another condition of which I have always had, but again it's just my sense of normal. As a child, I'd turn around multiple times in order to try and control the world.

Depression however is a severe lack of energy or drive. A complete lack of emotion along with slowed thinking and behaviours. A major appetite change, headaches, and sleep problems. Depression actually tends to have fewer physical symptoms, but the mental symptoms can be so dangerous (especially the potential for suicidal thoughts) and the lack



of energy so obvious that many people with depression deal with intense struggles daily that certainly rival the symptoms of anxiety. More than just sadness in response to life's struggles and setbacks, depression changes how you think, feel, and function in daily activities. It can interfere with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and enjoy life. The feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and worthlessness can be intense and unrelenting, with little, if any, relief.

You can't just will yourself to "snap out of it," but you possibly do have more control than you realise—even if your depression is severe and stubbornly persistent. For me the key is to start small and build from there. One example is for this year to help with any depression, I have a picture frame in an obvious place I see daily. It contains 9 individual pictures with words of what I wish to achieve in 2019. Planning a holiday, getting some sort of fitness level, a small holiday planned, staying in love with Cathy, staying connected with family, house renovations, changing jobs, improving my mental health and in the centre is letting my faith be bigger than my fear. I have purposely used the SMART principle. They need to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and have a Timeframe on them. I usually make my goals for the next 12 months only.

Anxiety and depression can each mess with your mind and can make it hard to perform everyday tasks without getting overwhelmed. It's sometimes a catch-22 of depression recovery: The things that help the most are the things that are the most difficult to do. Getting support plays an essential role in stabilising my depression. On your own, it can be difficult to maintain a healthy perspective and sustain the effort required to beat depression. At the same time, the very nature of depression makes it difficult to reach out for help. When you're depressed, the tendency is to withdraw and isolate so that connecting to even close family members and friends can be tough. I have my amazing wife Cathy, my two best friends in Miles who I have known for over 30 years and John from church for my spiritual/religious side who I can talk to. I think it would be advantageous if you had some key people who can listen to you without judging you. As many times you may feel too exhausted to talk, ashamed at your situation, or guilty for neglecting certain relationships. But this is just the depression talking. Reaching out is not a sign of weakness and it won't mean you're a burden to others. I'm sure your loved one's care about you and want to help. And if you don't feel that you have anyone to turn to, it's never too late to build **new friendships** and improve your support network.

The A & D factor! Cont.

Another tip for you is to try and understand your strengths, resilience or what sets you off. Much happiness and joy in my life is gone forever however I try and notice what I don't like or even love anymore but also notice what comes into the fore as result of my grief. I am more aware of what sets me off and what can calm me down and either try and work through it or as I do, steer clear as much as possible to avoid any guilt or bad moves. An example being, now I drive to work, what sets me off is drivers on the road who push in. I am trying to take another way to work to remove me from the opportunity of this anxiety.

While you can't force yourself to have fun or experience pleasure, you may be able to push yourself to do things, even when you don't feel like it. You could come up with a list of things that you can do for a quick mood boost. The more "tools" for coping with depression, the better. Maybe try and implement a few of these ideas each day, even if you're feeling good. Spend some time in nature, read a good book, watch a funny movie or TV show, take a long, hot bath, take care of a few small tasks, listen to music, do something spontaneous, practice relaxation techniques like yoga or meditation and exercise. Exercise is something you can do right now to boost your mood. I mean, if you can, put down this article and walk around the block right now!! Or do some stretching if you are limited for time

I encourage you to also challenge your thoughts. I find this hard to do all the time but am learning. Ask yourself the following questions and be honest and genuine. "What's the evidence that this thought is true? Not true?" "Will the world as I know it crumble and change as a result of my thoughts or actions?" "Is there another way of looking at the situation or an alternate explanation?" "How might I look at this situation if I didn't have depression?"

I can recall some instances when I was that depressed in the early years with my grief that my depression was a major risk factor for suicide. The deep despair and hopelessness that goes along with depression can make suicide feel like the only way to escape the pain. I didn't talk to anyone about it...but if you are reading this and if you or you think a friend or family member is considering suicide, **express your concern and seek help immediately**. Talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save a life.

I recently received a visit from depression. I had some sickness and was off work for 3 days. I still had a rumble in my stomach. The doctor said I had recovered from my sickness but was now depressed. All I remember is that this dark, sometimes emotionless cloud had taken over my mind and body. It had set up camp and wasn't leaving. These illnesses are a very small part of me and do not define my existence anymore. That's why I believe living with grief, anxiety, depression and OCD makes me a 'super man'. Because every day is a battle - this type of thinking has not come easy and those first few years I wasn't even close to this type of understanding of anxiety and depression - but I'll keep on fighting.

Now What?

If we take away the cliché's and numerous books on the topic of grief, anxiety and depression, what remains? Insights and learnings?

With insight comes a choice: Do nothing, do something. What is your next step on the journey?

Just keep in mind that this is my story and that it's not my intention to say that this is how it should be done. Everyone is different, everyone's personal circumstances are unique, and we all have to find our own path to getting better. You can only draw from other people's experiences.

Love to you all, IAN



Love Gifts



Love Gift Messages and Donations

Love Gift messages can be made on the back of the cover leaf that comes with the magazine. Please limit your Love Gift message to no more than 30 words, counting the date as one word.



DONATIONS OF STAMPS, STICKERS May 2019

Thank you to Phil & Marika Bayley for their donation in memory of Stephanie.

Thank You to Steven Katsineris for the donation of butterfly stickers in memory of Chione.

Thank you to Margaret Learmonth for the butterfly stickers in memory of John and Kealan.

Thank You to Danny Bendel for the donation of stamps in memory of Joshua.

Thank You to Jan Smith for the donation of stamps in memory of Ben & Zach.

Thank you to Judy O'Brien for the donation in memory of Mark.

Thank you to John Bradley for the donation in memory of Heather.

Thank you to Maureen "Foster" now Tucker for the donation to purchase stamps and cards in memory of John.

Thank you to Bev & Rod Foster for the donation in memory of Natalie.

Butterfly Memorial Board

I am the group leader for Ballarat TCF support group, I am in my 10th year of running the group. During those past 10 years of parents and or families making contact with me, it not only astounds me and horrifies me but mostly saddens me that I have 65 children's names on my list. 65 names that should not be on my list! 65 children that should be home safe with their families and loved ones.

There are a lot of bereaved families out there that have never chosen to make a connection with TCF looking for help and support. Can you imagine the names on my list if every family who has lost a child made contact with TCF?

My list would be never ending and so heartbreaking. To salute and celebrate our children in our group I have created a 'Butterfly Memorial Board' 65 butterflies, each with a child's name on it and the age they left us. Unfortunately, I know that will not be the end of my list; a butterfly will be placed on the board as our babies fly home.

Robyn Reeve
Ballarat TCF



Letters of Appreciation

To everyone at "Compassionate Friends". I would like to thank you for your beautiful card and find words written by Anne Edwards mother of Alison. Such lovely words that meant so much to me, just knowing someone remembered my son, even though they didn't know him. It was a lovely feeling and made a difference to my day.
Thank you.
Jean Dixon.

To everyone at Compassionate Friends, I deeply appreciate your thoughts and kindness sending a message in a card about Erin, my beautiful daughter. To think you took the time to write to me touched not only my heart but also my mind knowing you care. I was overwhelmed opening the card and reading the sincere and lovely sentences written inside. I wish to thank you for being there supporting families having to go through this, their horrendous and devastating loss. It takes a special and compassionate person to care like you.
Kindest regards,
Michelle Elphinstone

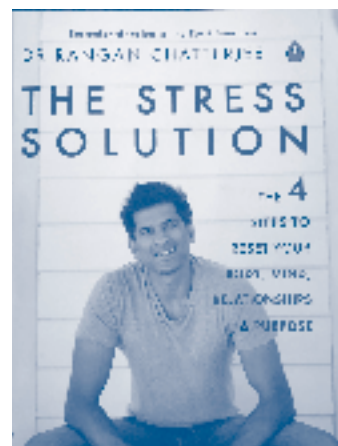
To all at Compassionate Friends, Thank you so much for remembering my beautiful daughter Alisha's anniversary. It means so much to my family and myself.
Thanks again,
Kathleen Horan & family.

Dear Compassionate Friends, We appreciate your lovely cards and messages sent on this anniversary. We are moved by the words and enclosure of poems.
Every blessing Bev & Rod Foster xx

BOOK REVIEW:

The Stress Solution by Dr Rangan Chatterjee 2018 Penguin Books Ltd

I've always been an avid reader but before losing my son Joseph in 2016 I never really read self-help books, preferring some sort of Nordic Noir! These days I'm drawn to the self-help section, searching for any piece of advice no matter how small that may hopefully help me feel just that tiny bit better.



Dr Chatterjee first came to my attention after listening to him on the Rich Roll podcast in July 2018, I was impressed with what he had to say so started listening to his own podcast, "Feel Better Live More", and soon ordered his first book, The 4 Pillar Plan which talks about how to relax, eat, move and sleep your way to a healthier life.

Recently I've read his second book, The Stress Solution. At the start of the book he mentions how losing a child makes us live our life much closer to the stress threshold than most and he believes his book could be helpful.

The blurb reads ...

Dr Rangan Chatterjee knows this better than anyone. As a practising GP he's seen firsthand how stress affects his patients and has found simple but effective methods to help them. 'It's thought that between 70 and 90 percent of GP consultations are related to stress.'

He shows how a small change in the way you approach your body-mind relationship's purpose can help you lead a more fulfilled, calmer life. In The Stress Solution, Rangan offers simple and achievable interventions to help you reset your life, packed with personal accounts and patient cases. This book will become your blueprint on how to live stress-free in the modern world.

The book is broken up into four pillars: Purpose, Relationships, Body and Mind. He tackles psychological stress, emotional stress, dietary stress, physical stress, technological stress, life stress and much more! He explains the long-term effects of stress from increasing high blood pressure and the risk of many serious diseases to the long term effect of stress making you even more prone to anxiety as you start to worry about everything and see danger when no danger is present!

As well as the usual advice you would probably expect to find in a book on stress such as eating well, minimizing alcohol, exercising, getting a good nights sleep and reducing screen time there are lots of other ideas that you may not have thought of before that could help reduce your stress. Ideas such as staring at a tree, designing a calm morning routine, hugging someone close to you each day, limiting exposure to BPA plastics, becoming a regular at a club or group, improving your gut health, increasing your core body temperature, as well as many more ideas many of which will only take up a few minutes of your time each day.

Some of my particular favourites were:-

Nature bathing, a daily dose can help reduce stress and if you can't always get outside or you live in the middle of the city he has other ideas you can consider such as making your phone or computer screen a picture of nature, lighting nature scented candles or looking at the stars before going to bed.

De-cluttering, studies of brain activity reveal that being surrounded by mess is physically taxing and the brain uses resources and energy to ignore distractions and untidiness. He gives ideas on how to de-clutter your life, which will also help declutter your mind.

Scheduling your time, we probably all have some sort of diary to keep track of appointments but he explains how scheduling can help you find more time to spend doing what you want to do and how it can help you spend time with the people that you want to spend time with. He suggests that you schedule in something that brings you joy, something that gives you a daily dose of pleasure, something that involves movement or exercise and something that trains your ability to delay gratification. By delaying gratification he explains that these days we're becoming far too used to getting what we want when we want it so we need to train our dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (a part of the brain) or diPFC by learning anything new that requires effort and practice such as learning a musical instrument, a new language, playing chess, or mastering a new sport. The ability to defer pleasure and reward has been linked to all kinds of positive life outcomes. I found the book to be very easy to read, he explains the science and reason behind all his ideas very clearly. His conclusion states that you don't need to do every single one of his ideas and not to look for perfection but for a balance and most of the ideas in his book are simple and free.

Jane Moschetti

Bereaved Mother of Joseph Moschetti (18)

Depression - a personal experience

My wife and I have just returned from holidays. While away, we talked about how I was now on top of my late-onset epilepsy. (Well hopefully, as without ongoing management it will return.)

What still lingers, is significant long-term memory loss (it's like my hard disk has been wiped) and depression.

When I was first diagnosed with depression, I angrily rejected the idea and went into denial. It wasn't until my epilepsy specialist threatened to stop treating me, that I finally sought help! At that stage, I had severe depression: not sleeping, absolutely no joy for life, not wanting to leave the house, not being able to reason/ think adequately etc.

Its cause, was my reaction to the traumatic upheaval to my life, resulting from having a seizure on the way home from the airport. That set off a journey of having my identity completely stripped away, losing my ability to think clearly or remember anything and, at any time, having violent uncontrollable seizures. I am a control freak and, I had suddenly lost control of my own body. I physically fought and regain that control. I also suffered severe mood swings, which is so unlike me. Additionally, I was having 'Absence seizures' where my brain would turn off for up to 30 seconds and I was completely unaware.

I was a General Manager in Perth, leading a major IT integration project. This was a role that had been especially created for me. After eight months, I realised I was unable to continue working and returned to Melbourne. I was just too sick. I felt I had failed.

I had failed my employer and my teams. I had failed my family. I had failed my body and I had failed myself. I didn't understand at it at the time, but I was I was in a state of deep grief – I was grieving for my former self and, grieving because I had let so many people down. I was also grieving because I had literally lost control of my life. (Please know, that I do not equate in any way, my grief to what you have suffered.)

Prior to my diagnosis, I recall considering driving my car into a tree – thinking my family would be better off without me. Another day, I spent a trip along the length of a Melbourne freeway, thinking about how I should just keep driving and disappear. I was also an angry person and a very difficult person to live with. I lost some friends because they didn't know how to be behave around me. Counselling really helped my depression. So too did the anti-depressant medication. I also joined an epilepsy support group and that was great (I ended up running it). But, what kept me going was the unwavering support I received from wife, Joyce. She stuck with me when I think lesser mortals would have left. (When I realised what a pain I was to live with, we had the "Line in The Sand Dinner". This was our way of sorting out what I needed to do to return to being a good husband and father.)

I slowly came to terms with my epilepsy and stopped fighting it. I slowly came to terms with my grief (though there are still days when I wonder what could have been). I am still on anti-depressant medication and will be for as long as I am on medication for epilepsy. Unfortunately, a side-effect of this medication, is that it causes mild depression in some people: Including me.

But I have learned so much because of my depression: It's OK to have it. There is no shame. Everyone's symptoms and impacts are different. I was very silly to ignore what was happening to me and to not seek help sooner.

I have also learned that depression is a treatable illness. With the right help, it can be managed over time. Also, there are many people within TCF who suffer or have suffered from depression. Talking about it is good. You are not alone.

John Sedunary

Chief Executive Officer

"No act of kindness, no matter how small is never wasted"
AESOP



Bereavement Support & Social Support Groups

“What TCFV Group Meetings offer is...

- The opportunity to get together with other bereaved people,
- The chance to talk about the person missing in their lives,
- The opportunity to drop the mask that society so subtly demands of each of us,
- The chance to cry without embarrassment,
- The opportunity to laugh without others thinking you must be “over it”, and
- The opportunity to bask in a non-judgemental atmosphere and make new friends.”

Support Group Meetings provide bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents the opportunity to meet in a safe environment with others who have “been there”, who understand and care. Group attendees report that meetings are an essential part of their “learning to live again” journey.

Social Support Group Meetings (held at a café) are not “formal” grief sharing like a support group – but we still welcome any discussion of grief, bereavement and our precious children, siblings and grandchildren. Like formal support groups, these meetings are also facilitated by group leaders.

Do I need to speak with someone before I come to a meeting?

If you’re planning to attend your first meeting with a group, we ask that you contact the Centre on 9888 4944 / 1300 064 068. This way, we can let the leaders know you’re planning to attend, and they can keep an eye out for you, and welcome you into the group. Group members report this has helped them in the process of settling into a group.

Is there a charge to attend?

The cost of attending a group is included in our TCF membership. You can attend as many groups as you like, in any location as part of joining our organisation. New members receive a 12-month complementary membership, after this it is \$55 per year (less than \$5 a month), which also gives you access to all of our other services.

I have baby sitting problems. Would it be alright to bring my child with me?

While we understand the difficulties of finding child care, we must ask that out of respect for the needs of others, you do not bring children (under 18 years of age) to meetings. At this time, we do not provide any services for bereaved parents or siblings below 18 years of age, but we can refer you to other agencies where these services are available.

June - August 2019 Meetings Support Groups (Metro)

MEETING GROUP	TIME	DATE	VENUE
Greensborough	1.30pm	First Wednesday: 5 Jun, 3 Jul, 7 Aug	‘THE MEETING ROOM.’ (next to Greenhills Preschool), Community Drive, Greensborough
Rowville	1.00pm	First Friday: 7 Jun, 5 Jul, 2 Aug	Bridgewater Centre, cnr Fulham Road & Bridgewater Road, Rowville
Canterbury (Night)	7.45pm	Second Tuesday: 11 Jun, 9 Jul, 13 Aug	TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury
Sunshine	7.30pm	Third Tuesday: 18 Jun, 16 Jul, 20 Aug	Salvation Army Drop-In Centre, 42 Devonshire Road, Sunshine
Canterbury (Day)	11.00am	Fourth Wednesday: 26 Jun, 24 Jul, 28 Aug	TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury
Bayside	7.00pm	Fourth Wednesday: 26 Jun, 24 Jul, 28 Aug	Highbury Community Centre, 2 Livingston St, Highbury



Specific Focus (Metro)

MEETING GROUP	TIME	DATE	VENUE
Suicide-bereaved (Eastern Suburbs)	7.30pm	Fourth Monday: 25 Jun, 23 Jul, 27 Aug	TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury
Suicide-bereaved (Western Suburbs)	7.00pm	First Wednesday: 5 Jun, 3 Jul, 7 Aug	Salvation Army Drop-In Centre, 42 Devonshire Road, Sunshine
Sibling Grief (18+) (Canterbury)	7.45pm	Second Tuesday: 11 Jun, 9 Jul, 13 Aug	TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury
Menspace	7.00pm	Third Wednesday: 19 Jun, 27 Jul, 21 Aug	TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury
Bereaved of a young child	10.30am	Forth Tuesday: (Feb/May/Aug/Nov) 26 Aug	TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury

Support Groups (Regional)

MEETING GROUP	TIME	DATE	VENUE
Bendigo	1.00pm	First Tuesday: 4 Jun, 2 Jul, 6 Aug	Bendigo Neighbourhood Hub, 155 Crook Street, Strathdale
Ballarat	7.00pm	First Tuesday: 4 Jun, 2 Jul, 6 Aug	Mt Clear Church of Christ (Church Hall), 1185 Geelong Road, Mt Clear
Wodonga	7.00pm	First Thursday: 6 Jun, 4 Jul, 1 Aug	St Patricks Hall, 515 Smollett Street, Albury
Mildura (Note: new time & day)	11.00am	Second Saturday: 8 Jun, 13 Jul, 10 Aug	MADEC Community Centre, 133-137 Madden Avenue, Mildura
Siblings Grief (18+) (Bendigo)		Third Monday: 17 Jun, 15 Jul, 19 Aug	The Gianna Centre, Shop 7, Victoria Lane, Pall Mall, Bendigo
Portland	7.00pm	Third Tuesday: 18 Jun, 16 Jul, 20 Aug	Star Theatre, 40 Julia Street, Portland
Camperdown	7.30pm	Fourth Monday: (fifth Monday in April) 24 Jun, 22 Jul, 26 Aug	Camperdown Uniting Church, cnr Leura & Barkly Streets, Camperdown
Geelong	7.30pm	Last Tuesday: 25 Jun, 30 Jul, 27 Aug	Noble Street Uniting Church, 26-42 Saffron Street, Newtown
Castlemaine	7.30pm	Last Thursday: 27 Jun, 25 Jul, 29 Aug	Maternal Child & Health Centre, Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine
Hamilton	Contact TCFV Centre for details: 1300 064 068		
Horsham	Contact TCFV Centre for details: 1300 064 068		

Social Support Groups (Metro & Regional)

MEETING GROUP	TIME	DATE	VENUE
Southern Peninsula	11.00pm	First Tuesday: 4 Jun, 2 Jul, 6 Aug	Contact TCFV Centre for venue: 1300 064 068
Men's Grief (Social Breakfast)	7.30am	First Thursday: 6 Jun, 4 Jul, 1 Aug	Wilson & Walsh, 129 Maling Road, Canterbury
Bayside	10.30am	Second Tuesday: 11 Jun, 9 Jul, 13 Aug	Blue Dish, 326 Highett Road, Highett
Geelong	10.00am	Second Tuesday: 11 Jun, 9 Jul, 13 Aug	Brioche Cafe, 175 West Fyans Street, Newtown
Yarraville	10.30am	Third Saturday: 15 Jun, 20 Jul, 17 Aug	Mantra Cafe, 10a Campbell Street, Yarraville
Suicide Bereaved) (Social Dinner)	7.00am	Second Thursday: 13 Jun, 11 Jul, 8 Aug	Box Hill RSL 26-28 Nelson Road, Box Hill
Healesville	Contact TCFV Centre for details: 1300 064 068		

Support & Social Support Groups (Interstate)

MEETING GROUP	TIME	DATE	VENUE
Hobart Support	7.30pm	Second Tuesday Bimonthly 11 Jun, 13 Aug	McDougall Building, 9 Ellersie Road, Battery Point
Hobart Social	Contact TCFV Centre for details: 1300 064 068		

Group Training



GROUP FACILITATOR SKILLS TRAINING



If you have an interest in establishing a TCF Support Group, or supporting an existing group, this training is an essential step towards fulfilling that goal.

The training commitment consists of:

- Completing a series of online training modules
- Attending two onsite training days: **20 & 21 July 2019**, 10am-4pm each day (held at TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury 3126)
- Also, attending and observing the running of an existing support group.

The course covers:

- the structure of meetings,
- empathetic listening and responding,
- our own self-care,
- grief theory,
- and managing group dynamics.

Please note: to participate in this training you will be past your second anniversary.

Facilitators:
 Andrew McNess, TCFV Volunteer Coordinator
 Jan McNess, TCFV Griefing Support & Social Support Leader

To discuss your involvement in the training, please contact Andrew at TCF Centre on (03) 9888 4544 / 1300 064 066 (Country Victoria) / andrewm@tcfv.org.au

Phone Training



TELEPHONE LISTENING SKILLS TRAINING



If you have an interest in supporting bereaved individuals and families, this training is an essential step towards fulfilling that goal.

The training commitment consists of:

- Completing a series of online training modules
- Attending two onsite training days: **3rd & 4th August, 2019**, 10am-1pm each day (held at TCFV Centre, 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury 3126)

The course covers:

- empathetic listening and responding,
- grief theory,
- the practicalities of taking support calls
- our own self-care.

Please note: to participate in this training you will be past your second anniversary.

Facilitators:
 Sue Brown, Telephone Answerer & Supervisor
 Jenny Galati, TCFV Volunteer Coordinator

To discuss your involvement in the training, please contact JENNY at TCF Centre on (03) 9888 4544 / 1300 064 066 (Country Victoria) / jennyg@tcfv.org.au

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ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE

In the past TCFV members have contacted us wanting to support businesses where the owners/operators have also experienced bereavement through the loss of a child, sibling or grandchild.

We would like to offer businesses the opportunity to grow their profile amongst our members - building a sense of community support complementing our support groups and services.

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MEMBER SERVICE

REIKI (NEW SERVICE)
 2nd Tuesday of the month at TCFV Centre
Appointment times:
 12.30pm, 2pm, 3.30pm - Dates: 9 July, 13 Aug
For bookings
 please email jennyg@tcfv.org.au
 REIKI is a form of
 hands-on healing that, it is believed,
 channels a form of "universal energy".
 With a sense of well-being,
 life can be seen through different eyes.

MEMBER SERVICE Art MEETING GROUP

Art Therapy:
 "Express Yourself Through Art"
 Please register at www.tcfv.org.au
 (via EVENTS Page)
TIME 7.00pm
DATE Third Monday: 15 July, 19 Aug
VENUE TCFV Centre
 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury

Thankyou *Supporters*

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0419 137 818

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02 9290 2355

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07 3254 2585

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0456 820 133

Western Australia

08 6107 6257

TCF Mandurah

08 9535 7761

4th Floor, Room 404, 32 York Street, Sydney 2000
505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm 4005

54 Simpson Street Ardross WA 6153

Mandurah Lottery House - 7 Anzac Place, Mandurah 6210

TCF on the internet - USA www.compassionatefriends.org - New Zealand (email) tcf.otago@xtra.co.nz

United Kingdom www.tcf.org.uk - Canada www.tcfcanada.net/ - Netherlands www.vook.nl/

Belgium (email) tcf.belgium@skynet.be

The Compassionate Friends Victoria

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Po Box 171 Canterbury, Vic. 3126

Phone: (03) 9888 4944 National Number 1300 064 068

Email: support@tcfv.org.au **Web:** www.tcfv.org.au