

The Seven principles of The Compassionate Friends Victoria (TCFV)

- 1.** TCFV offers friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.
 - The death of a child, sibling or grandchild causes a pain that can be better understood by those who have similar lived experiences.
 - TCFV's focus is on supporting parents, siblings and grandparents in their journey through the natural processes of grief.
 - TCFV defines the terms 'parent', 'sibling' and 'grandparent' broadly, welcoming the bereaved from all family units, including blended families.

- 2.** TCFV believes that bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents can help support each other in their bereavement journeys.
 - TCFV understands that each bereaved person travels a unique path through grief.
 - TCFV recognises that for some people, expressing thoughts and feelings is integral to the grief process and provide a safe, supportive environment for such expression.
 - The model of bereavement support that TCFV offers is based on the sharing of similar lived experiences and self-help. TCFV does not offer professional counselling, although recognises that there may be the need for referral to other services in the community.
 - TCFV values the importance of working in collaboration with other appropriate community services, respecting their contribution for a more complete model of bereavement support.
 - TCFV welcomes the opportunity to educate the community by sharing knowledge and resources.

- 3.** TCFV is inclusive of all members of society, regardless of socio-economic status, gender-identity, religion, ethnicity or culture.
 - TCFV is respectful of different beliefs and is not associated with any specific religion or ideology.
 - TCFV welcomes all parents, siblings and grandparents over the age of 18, who are bereaved of a child, sibling or grandchild of any age and from any cause.
 - TCFV does not endorse political candidates or parties.
 - TCFV members are encouraged to treat each other with care, respect and consideration.

- 4.** TCFV understands that every bereaved parent, sibling and grandparent has individual needs and rights.
 - TCFV understands that there is no 'correct' way to grieve.

- TCFV acknowledges that everyone deserves an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings, while not being compelled to do so.
 - All participants at TCFV events have the responsibility to listen to others, while treating each other with care, respect and consideration.
5. TCFV offers a range of services which include support groups, 24/7- and 365-days telephone support, grief resources, events, volunteering opportunities, online engagements, sibling chat service, creativity in bereavement activities, discussions about grief and community education.
- All TCFV services are delivered in a safe, friendly, non-judgemental and caring environment where participants are free and safe to express themselves.
 - TCFV's support groups are self-managing while operating within the organisation's principles, policies and practices.
 - All TCFV services are facilitated by appropriately trained staff and volunteers.
6. TCFV belongs to our members.
- TCFV encourages membership, where there are annual fees and specified services, although the organisation does not exclude non-members from accessing support services.
 - TCFV respects confidentiality of personal disclosures.
 - Where there is any media or observers at TCFV events, prior consultation of participants is required.
 - TCFV support meetings focus on sharing, grieving and hope. Organisational management issues are to be addressed outside of these meetings.
7. TCFV is a state-wide not-for-profit organisation supporting bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.
- TCFV is governed by its Constitution and guided by its policies and procedures. It is overseen by a volunteer Board of Management whose members are elected.
 - TCFV is represented on The Compassionate Friends Australia (TCFA) Board of Management (together with other state-based affiliates), where TCFA serves as a conduit to promote relationship building and collaboration between the various TCF organisations across Australia.
 - In the broader context, TCFV is a member of the world-wide Compassionate Friends chapters supporting bereaved families.

TCFV adapted the above from 'The Seven Principles' written by Art Anderson, Star Lake, NY. The principles followed the philosophy of The Compassionate Friends founded in Coventry England, 1969, which were further adopted by U.S. National Board of Directors, 1981 and endorsed by the National Board of TCF Canada, 1986.