

# The Compassionate Friends

*The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

Supporting Families After a Child Dies

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding & hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

June 2026

[tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com)

## MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM  
Community Hospice  
4368 Spyres Way  
Modesto, CA 95356

*Please join us at our  
next meeting on*

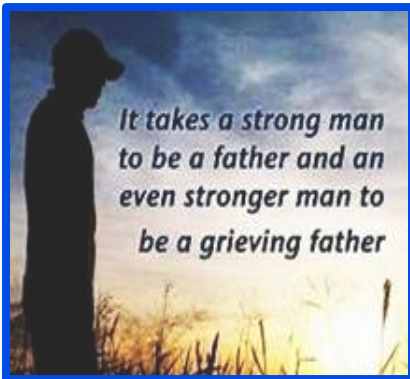
***Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>***

*Please arrive by 6:50 p.m.*

*We begin promptly  
@ 7:00 p.m.*

## Upcoming Meetings

July 13<sup>th</sup>  
August 10<sup>th</sup>  
September 14<sup>th</sup>



**Are you taking a  
vacation? Visiting family?  
Moving? Helping  
someone new to TCF to  
find a chapter?**

*Use the link below to find  
TCF chapters in other cities  
and states*

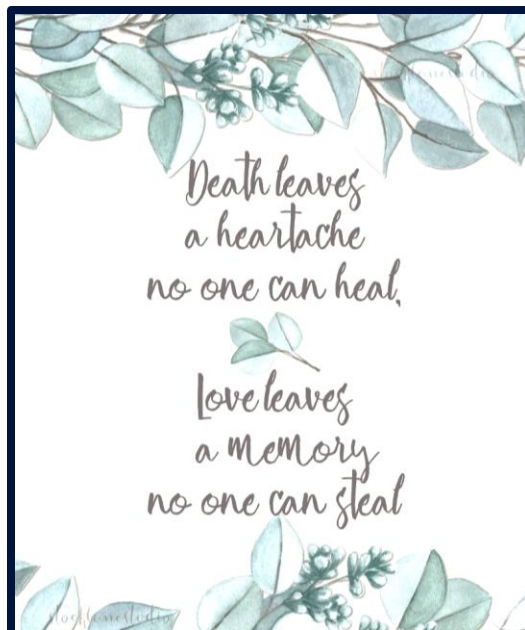
[Chapter Meeting Locator -  
Compassionate Friends](#)



## Our Mission

### ***The mission of The Compassionate Friends:***

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.



## MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786

*Please leave a message and  
a steering committee  
member will return your  
call.*

## 2026 Steering Committee

Suzanne Casity  
*Chapter Co-Leader*

Kris Leitner  
*Chapter Co-Leader*

Melinda Lansberry  
*Secretary*

Elsie Freeman  
*Treasurer*

Janet Neal  
*Outreach Coordinator*

Michele Mootz  
*Hospitality*

Lorie Boisse  
*Public Relations/Media*

Kris Leitner  
*Newsletter Editor*

Mike & Suzanne Casity  
*Website*

## **What Bereaved Parents Want You to Know**

- Grief is enduring
- The death of a child forever changes a parent
- Ask about their child
- Say their child's name
- Actions go much further than words



There is still time to register for the National Conference!!



Click on the photo to be taken to the registration page!

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## Group Events for the summer months!

June 27<sup>th</sup> 2026 – Rage Room Outing

August TBD 2026 – Chapter Dinner Get-Together

Before we commit to either of these events, we need to get chapter interest. If you would like to participate in either or both of these events, please do so by RSVPing to the chapter email address – [tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com)

Once we know the number of participants we will update you with the necessary information. This is a chance to spend time outside of the monthly chapter meetings and socialize with one another. We look forward to getting your responses and will keep you updated once dates, locations and times are finalized.

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Faith-Based Retreats for Bereaved Parents Finding hope and life after the loss of a child can be incredibly challenging. The loss of a child, no matter that child's age, is profoundly life-altering. It's as if the foundations of everything we once held dear have been shaken and cracked. The While We're Waiting ministry offers free Biblically based retreats, where bereaved parents form bonds and make connections with other moms and dads who truly understand the experience of child loss.

[whilewerewaiting.org](http://whilewerewaiting.org)

The Compassionate Friends is not a religiously affiliated non-profit organization, however we support those chapter members who are moving through their grief journey with a basis in faith. The *While We're Waiting* organization is a wonderful place to find like minded parents who are searching for support and understanding. Click on the link provided or the attached logo for more information.

# On Father's Day, Here's How To Support A Dad Who Has Lost A Child



The loss of a child is one of the most gut-wrenching things that can happen to a person. With such a profound loss in their life, a day devoted to celebrating fatherhood can intensify that heartbreak for dads. Especially for fathers who have children still living who may want to make the day special for him, supporting a dad in his grief on Father's Day is a delicate dance. Bittersweet is the word that comes to mind.

For dads mourning a miscarriage or stillborn, the loss they feel on Father's Day can be grieving the time they wish they could have had with their child. They may feel isolated or empty as Father's Day approaches and dads everywhere begin to make plans for the day. For dads who have lost a child that they had more time with, the day may bring up memories of past Father's Days and how they used to celebrate.

But, the day is what it is — a holiday to honor *all* that dads are. A dad who has lost a child is still a dad, so here's what experts say you can do to support them.

## **Don't avoid a grieving dad on Father's Day.**

"First and foremost, it would be to make sure that grieving fathers aren't alone or avoided for fear of bringing up unpleasant memories of fatherhood," licensed professional clinical counselor Mike Gallagher tells Romper. "The grief process is different for everyone, but one of the best ways to support a father who's lost a child is to make sure they know they are important, and that fatherhood didn't end with the loss of their child."

If you aren't someone living with a grieving dad (maybe you're their friend, coworker, or sibling), reach out to them and see what you can do to support them through Father's Day.

If you feel comfortable, pick up the phone. "Call instead of texting so you can gauge from their voice how they are doing emotionally and you can take cues from them," recommends neuropsychologist Dr. Sanam Hafeez. "If they seem like they want to talk and reminisce or cry, be that outlet for them. If they want a friend to join them on a particular remembrance activity, offer to be there. If they seem not to know what they want, ask how you can make their day better, or 'How can I support you today?'"

## **Acknowledge Father's Day and their role as a dad.**

While your gut instinct might be to avoid the hurt that mentioning a dad's loss or celebrating the day could bring, experts say this strategy could backfire.

"Downplaying the significance of Father's Day for a grieving father could be sending a message that their experience as a dad, or the loss they are feeling, is insignificant," Gallagher says. "While we want to honor the grieving process, we don't want to ignore or extinguish their memories as a father. While Father's Day might look different without their child, there should still be some ways to honor their love for their child and their role as dad."

When you speak to a grieving dad about the holiday, you can address their role as a father to show support. "If you know the name of their child, make sure to address their deceased child by name so you don't come across as impersonal," Hafeez tells Romper. "If they still have living children, remind them of what a good father they are and how loved they are by their child or children."

## Honor a grieving dad's child on Father's Day.

Especially within a family where other children may have lost their sibling and a mother her child, finding a way to honor the loss on Father's Day can be helpful for everyone involved — dad included.

“One way the rest of the family can support a grieving father is by collaborating with dad to create a new tradition to honor the child they lost,” Gallagher says. “Maybe go to a shared fishing spot, spend time on a hike they used to share together. While their deceased child is no longer able to be there physically, they still may be able to feel connected to them through a shared experience or memory.”

There are a ton of ways to do this, so brainstorm together as a family and see what Dad is actually up for.

“You can do something kind together in the name of the child. It could be a monetary donation, volunteering together, or doing a project for a neighbor,” Hafeez says. “Celebrate something together that the deceased child loved. For example, maybe the child was a baseball fan, you can all go out to a ball game. If it's not too painful, you can watch old home movies or go through photo albums together.”

A grieving dad might also just need to get his mind off of his loss for the day. Even if you engage in activities that honor their child, you can also pair that with something fun for Dad if he's up for it. “If you know that there is something Dad loves that never fails to make him laugh or hold his concentration, engage him in that activity for Father's Day to take his mind off his grief,” Hafeez suggests.

## How to say "Happy Father's Day" to a dad who lost a child

Though Hafeez recommends calling, you may still want to wish a grieving dad a “Happy Father's Day” in a card, by email, or by text. This could be especially true if they have multiple children and will be celebrating the day with them despite grieving the loss of a child. Clearly, they may not feel “happy,” but you can still express the sentiment and your well wishes with words.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- I know today is hard, but we are wishing you all the best this Father's Day.
- Holding you close to my heart this Father's Day.
- Praying for comfort for you today on Father's Day.
- Thinking of you this Father's Day.
- Remembering your sweet baby this Father's Day. May your day be filled with love.
- Despite the heaviness of the day, I wanted to reach out to wish you a Happy Father's Day.
- I hope you feel loved this Father's Day.
- There is no right or wrong way to spend Father's Day, so I hope you're getting the healing day you deserve.

## Ask Dad what he needs on Father's Day

If you want to make a plan for Father's Day, keep dad and his needs centered. It's better to ask him what he's OK with than to assume he feels any certain way about making new memories, especially when it comes to honoring a lost child on Father's Day.

“The key would be to allow dad to share in this process of creating a new tradition, rather than deciding *for* dad,” Gallagher says. “This wouldn't just allow Dad to remember their child, but also remind them of the support they still have.”

While Hafeez explains that a dad whose pain is still quite raw may need more space than others on Father's Day (especially when a loss is recent), she suggests asking what the dad prefers when it comes to observing the holiday.

“A father of a deceased child will, no doubt, be aware of Father's Day approaching,” Hafeez tells Romper. “Not speaking about it is just keeping the elephant in the room. When in doubt, simply ask what would make that person most comfortable in terms of observing the day.”

## [How To Support A Grieving Father On Father's Day](#)

## A Father's Grief



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

It must be very difficult  
To be a man in grief.  
Since "men don't cry" and "men are strong"  
No tears can bring relief.  
It must be very difficult  
To stand up to the test.  
And field calls and visitors  
So that she can get some rest.  
They always ask if she's alright  
And what she's going through.  
But seldom take his hand and ask,  
"My friend, how are you?"  
He hears her cry in the night  
And thinks his heart will break.  
And dries her tears and comforts her  
But "stays strong" for her sake.  
It must be very difficult  
To start each day anew.  
And try to be so very brave-

*He lost his child too.*

~ Eileen Knight Hagemester

## ♥ LOVE GIFTS ♥

Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, sibling or grandchild in any amount. Donations received are used for our annual Candle Lighting Program each December, for sending our monthly newsletter via US mail and for community outreach. We are here to reach out to other bereaved families who may not be aware we are here to lend our support after the death of a child. Please send your tax-deductible donation to the PO Box below.

**Heyam Khacho, in loving memory of her beloved daughter, Rita Farha**

Please fill out the information below and send with a check to:

The Compassionate Friends  
Modesto Area Chapter  
PO Box 578713  
Modesto, CA 95357

Child,  Sibling or  Grandchild \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Passing \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Donation amount \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Your email address \_\_\_\_\_

Your address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like your gift listed in our monthly newsletter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling?

The amount will remain anonymous Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

The Compassionate Friends is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

# Dads Grieve Too

## *And They Need Other Grieving Dads*



### ***Dads grieve too.***

The people in our loss community say it often and we say it with such passion.

### ***Dads grieve too.***

However, right after we finish that statement the discomfort settles in. A question inevitably arises:

Yes, dads grieve, but, *how do we support them in their grief?* There's a lot we can do.

We can:

- ♥ Listen to their stories and to their silence.
- ♥ Recognize and honor their fatherhood in its many iterations.

But, there is something we can't do for them. ***We can't be fathers.***

### ***Grieving dads need other grieving dads.***

They need the words and the support and the companionship of other fathers like them.

- ♥ Fathers who have known loss and who are living lives touched by grief.
- ♥ Fathers who know what it's like to hold the hands of their child's mother (or partner) as the helplessness takes hold.
- ♥ They need to share experiences with someone who has also paced hospital floors in despair and sat in uncomfortable chairs while receiving devastating news.

Dads need each other.

Take a moment to consider what it has meant for you, as a mother who knows loss or infertility (or both), to read about another mother with an experience like yours. It means everything to you to know that there is someone out there who can empathize with your story.

### ***Now, take a moment to consider what that could do for the fathers we know.***

I considered this very idea and I reached out to this incredible community with a request: Please share resources for fathers created by *other fathers*. For me, it was crucial to gather content that was from other dads because that is what dads need. It was necessary to find dads with varied experiences who offered a variety of options.

Because that's what our fathers need. They need the options that the mothers in this community have. Instead of offering up one dad, I wanted to offer a community. I can now say with confidence that grieving dads are out there. There is a community of fathers out there and they are eager to connect with other fathers who have experienced the heartbreak of building a family and the overwhelming love that fathers have for ALL of their children.

Please share this list of resources with the dads in your life. Besides our own love and support, the greatest gift we can give our dads is the love and support of one another. Because dads grieve too, and they need other grieving dads.

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## RESOURCES FOR GRIEVING DADS

### *Blogs and Websites:*

- [A Father's Grief](#)
- [Pine Cones and Study Days](#)
- [Daddy To A Rainbow & A Star](#)
- [Dads Grieve Too Series on Hannah Pontillo: Trying To Navigate Life After Child Loss](#)
- [Mia's Legacy](#)
- [Diary Of An Almost Father](#)
- [Shoebox Full Of Memories](#)
- [Pillars of Strength](#)
- [Grieving Dads](#)
- [36 Things To Do For Those In Grief \(Essay\)](#)
- [I Am Still A Father \(Essay\)](#)

### *Facebook Community Pages and Groups:*

- [Dad Minus One \(Facebook Page\)](#)
- [Grieving Dads – To The Brink and Back \(Facebook Page\)](#)
- [Grieving Fathers \(Facebook Page\)](#)
- [Diary Of An Almost Father – Men's Group \(Closed Facebook Group\)](#)
- [Sad Dad's Club: MISS Foundation Support & Social Group \(Closed Facebook Group\)](#)
- [Grieving Fathers \(Closed Facebook Group\)](#)
- [Pregnancy After Loss Support – Group for Dads \(Closed Facebook Group\)](#)
- [The Grieving Dad's Project \(Closed Facebook Group\)](#)

### *Instagram Accounts:*

- [@pine\\_cones\\_and\\_study\\_days](#)
- [@stilledads](#)
- [@pops\\_and\\_roos\\_dad](#)
- [@robcruss](#)
- [@dadsgrievetoo](#)

### *Books (Links will bring you to Amazon page for book):*

- [A Guide For Fathers: When A Baby Dies by Tim Nelson](#)
- [Grieving Dads: To The Brink and Back by Kelly Farley](#)
- [From Father to Father: Letters From Loss Dad To Loss Dad by Emily Long](#)

### *Retreats:*

- [A Memory Grows](#)
- [The Uncharted Trail](#)

Article and Resources written by: Rachel Whalen

<https://stillstandingmag.com>

Check out our closed Facebook page, *The Modesto Area of TCF*. Make a request to join the page and an Administrator will approve your request.

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Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at – *modestoriverbankarea\_tcf*.

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Our Steering Committee wants to provide the best possible support to each of our TCF Chapter members and friends. Please contact a member of the Steering Committee with any concerns you have or any ideas about how our Chapter can be of support to you and others. We're also available if you'd like to talk about your child or some aspect of the challenges of your bereavement journey. You can reach us by email at: [tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com) or by phone at 209-622-6786 or on Facebook.

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Please remember to send in your child's photo so that it can be added to the new TCF Modesto-Riverbank website. Send photos to: [scasity@comcast.net](mailto:scasity@comcast.net)

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Visit our website for information and to stay up to date on chapter events.  
[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

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The vision statement of **The Compassionate Friends** is that everyone who needs us will find us and **everyone who finds us will be helped.**

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. Please note, all three questions need to be answered in order to be approved. If you are on a phone or tablet, you will need to scroll down before hitting "submit." If you are still waiting for approval after three days, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

### PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS

[TCF - Loss of a Child](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth](#)  
[TCF - Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Loss of an Infant Grandchild](#)  
[TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Child 4 -12 Years Old](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Child 13-19 Years Old](#)  
[TCF - Loss of an Adult Child](#)  
[TCF - Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children](#)  
[TCF - Grieving the Loss of a Child as a Single Parent](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Stepchild](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Grandchild](#)  
[TCF - Sibs \(for bereaved siblings\)](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a LGBTQ+ Child](#)  
[TCF - Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a Child](#)  
[TCF - Multiple Losses](#)  
[TCF - Men in Grief](#)  
[TCF - Daughterless Mothers](#)  
[TCF - Sudden Death](#)  
[TCF - Loss to COVID-19 and Other Infectious Diseases](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)  
[TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Suicide](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Homicide](#)  
[TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Cancer](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Child with Special Needs](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Long-term Illness](#)  
[TCF - Loss after Withdrawing Life Support](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Mental Illness](#)  
[TCF - Finding Hope for Parents through TCF SIBS](#)  
[TCF - Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren](#)  
[TCF - Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation Issues](#)  
[TCF - Inclusion and Diversity](#)  
[TCF - Grieving with Faith and Hope](#)  
[TCF - Secular Support](#)  
[TCF - Reading Your Way through Grief](#)  
[TCF - Crafty Corner](#)