



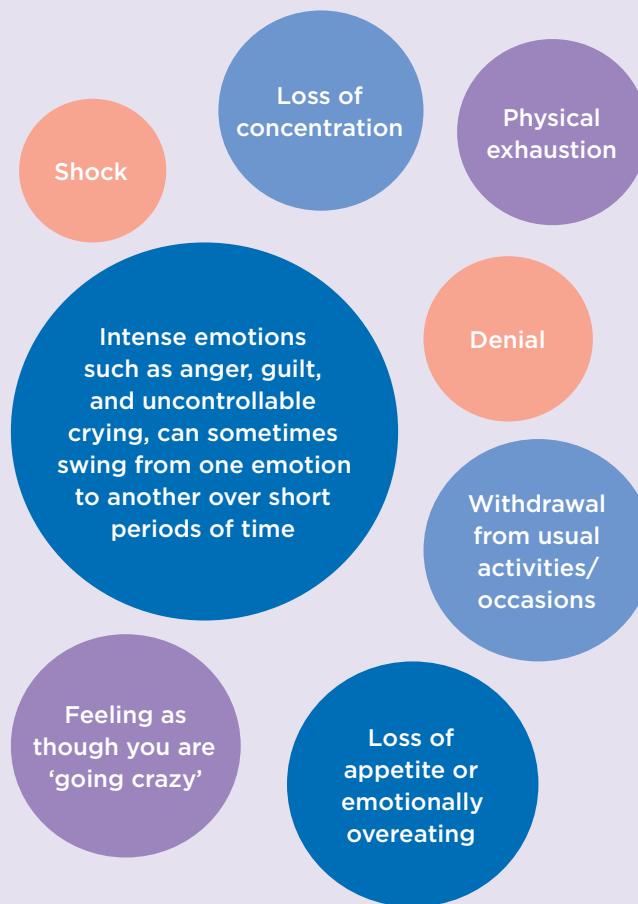
The Compassionate
Friends Australia



Understanding grief – bereaved by suicide

Normal grief reactions...

We are unprepared for the reality of grief. Not knowing what is 'normal' can cause further anxiety. Below are some typical reactions.



Remember that whatever you are feeling is normal for you and that's OK.

Helpful hints for supporting grieving people

- ✓ **Offer practical support**...such as meals, shopping, gardening, errands, looking after siblings etc. Don't wait to be asked and be mindful that bereaved families may still need this support in the early years.
- ✓ **Don't judge**...there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Don't say 'you should...' or 'you shouldn't...' Simply listening is far more helpful.
- ✓ **Accept a wide variety of emotions**...such as sadness, anger, confusion, fear, guilt or relief. You cannot make someone feel worse or 'remind' them of their grief. They are living with it every day.
- ✓ **Say the name of their loved one**...listen and allow the grieving person to talk.
- ✓ **Avoid clichés**...such as 'At least you have other children', 'It was meant to be' or 'They're in a better place'. Well meaning statements like these are unhelpful and often hurtful.
- ✓ **Don't assume**...people who are grieving aren't necessarily showing it. Ask how they are feeling/coping/managing with genuine concern.
- ✓ **You can't fix it**...no one can take away the pain and sadness but knowing that people care, is comforting and healing.



There is no way of predicting that someone is going to take action to end their life.

Some people may have been diagnosed with a particular condition and endured years of hospital stays, others may not have shared any problems or shown any cause for concern.

Either way, suicide has a profound impact on all the family, then there is a ripple effect on friends, work mates, school friends and the wider community.

Denial, shock, guilt, anger, depression, self-blame and an intense questioning of 'why' are normal grief reactions which can be heightened when a loved one dies by suicide.

A feeling of failure, of not being able to keep your loved one alive despite your love and care for them is also a common reaction for those bereaved by suicide. Try to accept that you did the best you could with the knowledge you had at the time.

Give yourself permission to grieve

You have the right to grieve as long and as intensely as necessary.

Guilt

Feelings of guilt may surface and 'if only' is a phrase you may find yourself repeating frequently. Consider replacing 'if only' with perhaps. 'Perhaps it would have made a difference'. Remember that their pain was so intense, they may not have accepted any help that you or anyone had to offer.

Anger

Anger is also a common reaction. Anger at others, at professionals and even at your child, sibling or grandchild who has died. This is usually a protective mechanism we adopt to help us handle the pain and hurt. Try to recognise this and be aware that anger can create more problems if we do not talk it out.

Why

There is a need to ask 'Why'. Often there are no clear answers, it is normal and even necessary to ask why, for as long as is needed.

TCF bereaved by suicide support groups

Bereaved by Suicide support groups enable you to share with others who have walked the same path and truly understand. These support groups are facilitated by trained facilitators who are themselves bereaved by suicide.

About us

Every member of The Compassionate Friends has experienced the devastating death of a child in their family.

We provide a haven to share memories of your child, brother, sister or grandchild, both sad and happy, as often as you need, without judgement, rejection or a lack of understanding.

Contact can be made in a variety of ways, such as:

- Drop-in centres to talk over a cuppa
- 24-hour grief support number
- Support groups
- Email
- Online

Whatever contact option works best, you will always be talking to someone who has lived through the death of a child in the family.

National

🌐 tcfa.org.au

📍 229 Canterbury Road, Canterbury VIC 3126

New South Wales

🌐 tcfnsw.org.au

✉ admin@tcfnsw.org.au

📍 603/109 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Queensland

🌐 compassionatefriendsqld.org.au

✉ admin@tcfqld.org.au

📍 44 Newdegate Street, Greenslopes QLD 4120

South Australia

🌐 compassionatefriendssa.org.au

Victoria

🌐 tcfv.org.au

✉ support@tcfv.org.au

Western Australia

✉ info@compassionatefriendswa.org.au

✉ tcfmandurah@bigpond.com

New South Wales support
Phone: 02 9290 2355
Freecall: 1800 671 621

24/7
grief support
1300 064 068

