

The Seven Principles of the Compassionate Friends

- 1. TCFQ offers friendship, understanding and support to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.**
 - We believe that the pain from the death of a child, sibling or grandchild is best understood by others with lived experience of such a loss.
 - We focus on supporting bereaved parents and families through the natural process of grief.
 - We define the terms *parent*, *sibling* and *grandparent* broadly, welcoming the bereaved from all family units.
- 2. TCFQ believes that bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents can help support each other in their bereavement.**
 - We believe that while each bereaved person's grief is unique, we can find support in our shared experience.
 - We recognise that expressing thoughts and feelings is part of grieving and we provide a safe, supportive environment for such expression.
 - We are a self-help organization offering peer support from lived experience. We do not offer professional counselling.
 - We acknowledge the importance of other community and professional services and recognise the value of these services.
 - We welcome the opportunity to share what we have learned about the needs of bereaved families with professionals and the wider community.
- 3. TCFQ is inclusive of all bereaved parents and families regardless of religion, ethnicity, financial status or nationality.**
 - We respect different belief systems and espouse no specific religious or philosophical ideology.
 - TCFQ does not participate in legislative or political controversy, and do not endorse political candidates or parties.
 - We express our individual views with respect and consideration for those who may disagree with us.
- 4. TCFQ understands that bereaved parents and their families have individual needs and rights.**
 - We recognise that there is no *correct* way to grieve nor that the emotional and spiritual dilemmas raised by the death of our children need *solving*.
 - We acknowledge that everyone deserves and opportunity to be heard, although no one is compelled to speak.
 - We accept the responsibility to listen when someone speaks.



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5. TCFQ offers support services in person, on the phone, online and other channels to help meet the needs of bereaved families.

- We recognise the importance of establishing local TCFQ support groups to provide services in both metropolitan and regional areas.
- We provide a supportive, non-judgemental environment for bereaved parents and families to feel safe and free to share in an atmosphere of openness and honesty.
- TCFQ support groups are self-managing but operate within the TCFQ principles, policies and practices.
- TCFQ provides administrative support and training for staff and volunteers

6. TCFQ belongs to its members.

- We treat what is said in TCFQ and TCFQ support groups as confidential and what we learn about each other is privileged information.
- We recommend that attendance at support groups by the media, students, or other observers be permitted only with the prior consent of group members.
- We encourage membership of TCFQ and payment of any annual fee, although TCFQ services are open to all bereaved families regardless of membership
- Support meetings focus on sharing, grieving and hope. Any organizational or management issues will be addressed in other forums.

7. TCFQ coordinates services across the State in the support of bereaved parents and their families.

- TCFQ is governed by our Constitution and overseen by a volunteer Board of Management whose members are elected.
- TCFQ encourages its members to support the goals of the organisation by contributing their time, skills and resources.
- TCFQ is represented on The Compassionate Friends Australia (TCFA) Board of Management to promote relationship building and collaboration between the various TCF organisations across Australia.
- TCFQ is one of many Compassionate Friends organisations world-wide that follow similar principles in the support of bereaved families.

With acknowledgement to Art Peterson, TCF USA who wrote the original version of "Seven Principles of The Compassionate Friends" in line with the philosophy of The Compassionate Friends founded in Coventry, England in 1969.

