



# The Compassionate Friends of Canada

## When A Child Dies....

## National Newsletter - October 2017

### National Office

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### National Executive:

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Chapter Development Committee  
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Barbara Kachur (Saskatoon, SK)  
Gary Kachur (Saskatoon, SK)  
Judy Dowd (Campbell River, BC)

### *Transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.*

- Reverend Simon Stephens, Founder, TCF

Summer has come and gone in many parts of our great country and fall has settled in. In some parts of Canada winter is here already. Sharing meetings are back to regular schedules and unfortunately we have new members who are attending for the first time. Some attendees are tentative to speak because they may be unfamiliar with how sharing circles work. This month's focus is on "Sharing Circle - Respect"

### *What should I say at a Sharing Circle?*

While there are guidelines and script suggestions for the Circle Opening and Circle Closing, the time between is deliberately unstructured to suit the particular needs of those attending. But even without a prescribed format, the group discussion should still adhere to the key Principles of TCF. In the Sharing Circle, the core principle is "Respect" which should be both given and received by all participants.

"Respect" means creating a safe space to share by not criticizing or dismissing any opinions with which we may disagree, but presenting contrary ideas in a non-confrontational manner.

"Respect" means recognizing that although we all share the pain of our child's death, each individual grieves differently and may be at different stages of their grief journey. Each has the right to be heard, and in return, should be open to hearing other points of view.

"Respect" means that the newly-bereaved feel that their loss is acknowledged and that even the feeling of "going crazy" that they often experience is understood and validated by those further along. Empathy and acceptance are

key, along with realistic encouragement that openly sharing their story will help them get through the emotional turmoil.

“Respect” means sharing our own relevant experiences while refraining from offering grief “solutions”. Say *“I found doing xxx helped me”* rather than *“You should do xxx”*.

“Respect” means accepting the spiritual situation of each individual and not promoting any specific religious or philosophical ideology or practice. Remember the insightful words of the TCF Credo – *“Some have found their faith to be a source of strength, others are struggling to find answers.”* Offer support to their search but let them find their own answers.

“Respect” means encouraging conversation by asking “open” questions (i.e. ones that require more than a simple “Yes” or “No” answer). For example, ask *“How was your day?”* instead of *“Did you have a good day?”*.

Although emotions will often be quite raw in the Sharing Circle, clearly stating the “Ground Rules” in the opening, and a respectful attitude on the part of each participant, will ensure that almost any topic can be discussed openly and with sensitivity to the benefit of all.

Andy Bond, Chapter Development Committee, TCF Canada

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### Help Available

The handbook *“Information for Facilitators”* compiled for a workshop at the recent National Gathering is being made available at no charge to Chapter Leaders for local printing and binding. The document is 40 pages, approx. 30 MB in .pdf format, and delivered via Dropbox. If you would like to receive a copy, please e-mail

[ChapterDevelopment@TCFCanada.net](mailto:ChapterDevelopment@TCFCanada.net).

### Help Wanted

The South East New Brunswick (SENB) Chapter is updating their Chapter brochure and looking for examples for ideas. If your Chapter has a brochure (in Word format) that you would like to share, please forward it to

[ChapterDevelopment@TCFCanada.net](mailto:ChapterDevelopment@TCFCanada.net). Thank you!

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### TCF Canada’s Facebook page:

Many bereaved parents in Canada are still unaware that TCF Canada has a closed, moderated Facebook page: **The Compassionate Friends of Canada**. To join, just go to the **Facebook** site, then on the FB search bar, type in **The Compassionate Friends of Canada**. You will be asked some basic questions to make sure that you are joining as a fellow bereaved parent (not someone promoting a product or service, for example). Many are finding this to be a safe place to share thoughts, feelings and experiences related to their grief journey. Bonus: it’s a forum that is available around the clock, from anywhere that has an internet signal.

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CONGRATULATIONS to the Burin Peninsula Chapter on its first anniversary!

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CONGRATULATIONS to TCF Winnipeg on their 40th anniversary!

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