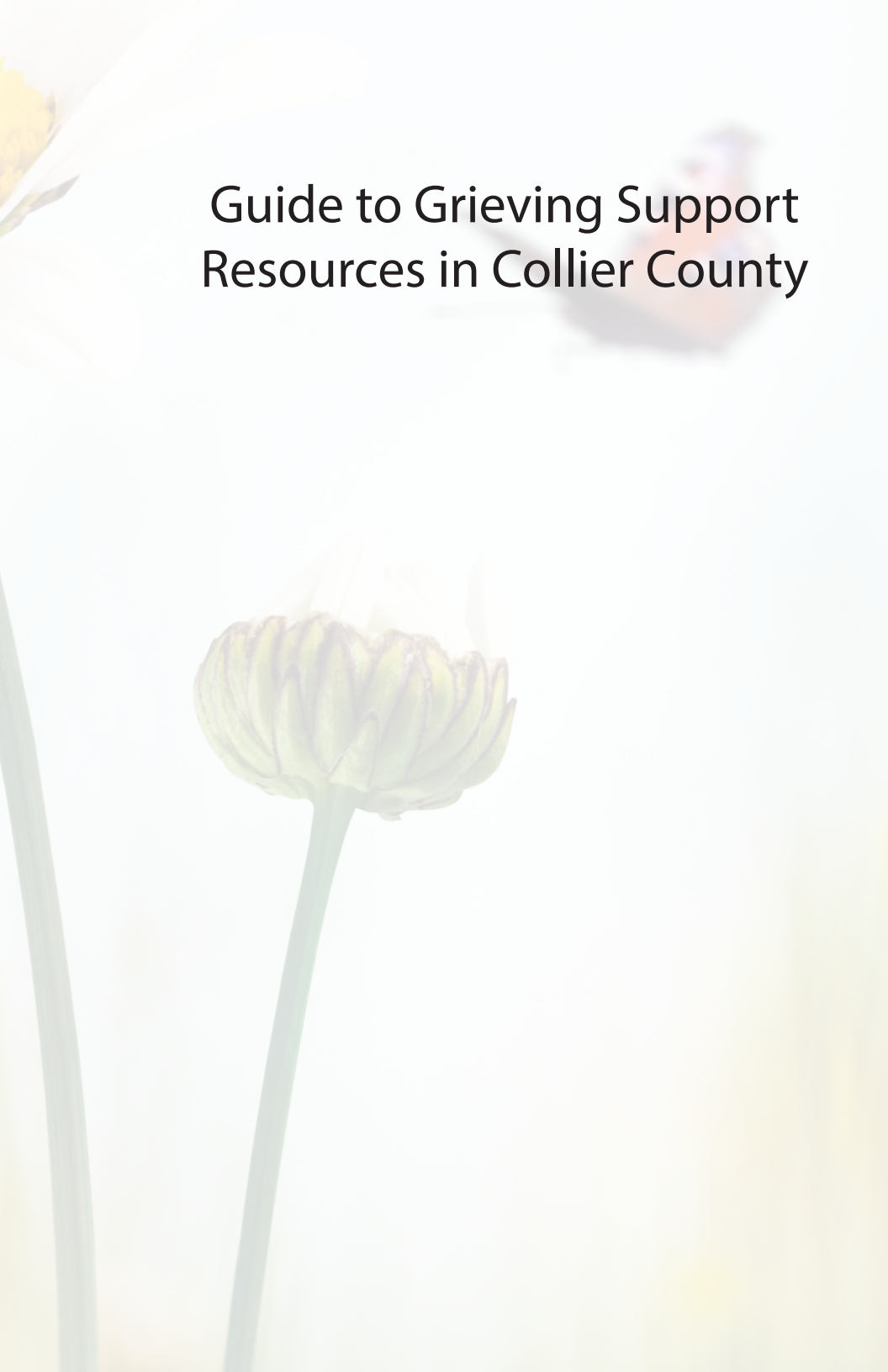
Guide to Grieving Support Resources in Collier County



The death of a child, sibling, parent or grandchild – at any age, from any circumstance – is indeed one of the cruelest blows that life has to offer. The journey through this grief is long and difficult. In the early moments, we may find ourselves in an all-consuming pain beyond description. It can be tough to live our everyday lives, challenging to think about anything other than our loss. Even happy memories may bring us pain for a time.

People do not “get over” the death of a child, sibling, parent or grandchild, nor “snap out of it” as the outside world often thinks we should. This loss is not an illness from which we recover. It is a life-altering change that forces us to build a new life for ourselves and our families, in a world that no longer includes our loved one.

Remember that you are not the only one who has gone through this profound loss and grief. The grieving process can be made a little easier with support. A variety of grieving support resources are available, many of which are online. Below, you’ll find the best grief-related resources in Collier and on the Web for children, parents, spouses, siblings, friends, acquaintances, coworkers and employers.

Community Memorial Programs:

Avow
Butterfly Releases, Avow Remembering memorial services (239) 261-4404.

The Compassionate Friends Southwest Florida Chapter
Candle Lighting - “. . .because you need not walk alone. . .”
Second Sunday of December
info@tcfswfl.org and 239-690-7801.

NCH Safe & Healthy Children’s Coalition
“Butterfly Release Ceremony & a 1-2 Mile Candlelit Beach Walk” to remember the children who have lost their lives due to drowning.
Second Friday of January
Info@SafeHealthyChildren.org and 239-624-4033.

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Project HELP, Inc.

Project HELP works with dignity and compassion to ease the pain of those who have been affected by rape, violence, crime or loss of a loved one.
239-649-1404
24/7 Crisis Helpline: 239-262-7227
projecthelp@projecthelpnaples.org www.projecthelpnaples.org - No cost

AVOW

Founded in 1993, Avow's Children's Services program serves children grieving any kind of loss -- from death, divorce, deportation, incarceration, illness, and more. Avow offers camps, individual and group sessions, family meetings, book/movie discussions, school assistance, and community education. All counselors are trained or licensed bereavement professionals
239-261-4404
bereavement@avowcares.org, AvowCares.org - No cost

Valerie's House

Valerie's House offers Grief Group sessions as well as individual sessions when needed.
239-841-9186
info@ValeriesHouseSWFL.org, ValeriesHouseSWFL.org - No cost

The Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends is a peer to peer Group. Their Chapter has 2 meetings a month. They also provide individual phone support, again peer to peer.
Local 239-690-7801 National 1-877-969-0010
info@tcfswfl.org, tcfswfl.org
Compassionatefriends.org - No cost

Surviving After a Suicide Loss (Support group of Project H.U.G.S.)

For over 30 years their free weekly peer run Suicide Survivor Support Group offers a safe place for members to share their grief and to receive and provide mutual support.
239-253-6600
info@survivingafterasuicide.com
Survivingafterasuicide.com - No cost

Vitas Healthcare

Vitas provides bereavement services at not cost to caregivers, family and friends of Vitas patients, as well as to anyone in the community who is grieving.
239-649-2300
VITAS.com - No Cost

Guide to Grieving Support Resources on the Web

Bereaved Parents of the USA
This national, non-profit self-help group offers many resources for bereaved parents to help them rebuild their lives.
bereavedparentsusa.org

Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation
Families don't have to face childhood cancer without support. The Childhood Cancer Foundation provides emotional, educational and practical assistance for families in need.
candle.org/family-services

CJ First Candle
This organization provides bereavement support to families who have suffered the loss of a baby from SIDS, SUID or stillbirth.
firstcandle.org

Parent Grief Support Directory
Find a wide array of local, national and international grief support resources for grieving parents.
live-evermore.org

MISS Foundation
For families who have experienced the death of a child, find grief resources and online support forums which are fully moderated for safe, caring interactions with others. missfoundation.org
Perinatal Hospice and Palliative Care Resources for Parents – These resources are for parents who have been told by medical professionals that their unborn baby will likely die before or after delivery.
perinatalhospice.org/resources-for-parents.html

The TEARS Foundation
This non-profit organization offers compassionate financial assistance to grieving parents who have lost a baby and need to make final arrangements.
thetearsfoundation.org

The Compassionate Friends - Supporting Families After a Child Dies
This non-profit organization exists to provide friendship, understanding, and hope to those going through the natural grieving process.
compassionatefriends.org

10 WAYS TO HELP YOURSELF WITH GRIEF

1. Let Others Help You
- Tap bonds with friends, teachers and counselors
- Trust others to help
- Share feelings and pain

2. Remember It's Normal To Feel What Seems Abnormal
- It is common to feel that you're 'going crazy'
- Personal disorganization is common
- Anger and fear will be present

3. Express Thoughts and Feelings
- Words are most helpful and least harmful
- Crying is healthy - it is ok to cry
- Do not fear losing control

4. Do Not Try to Avoid Grief
- Avoiding grief adds misery
- Lean into your feelings
- Grief postponed is acceptance postponed

5. Reach Out
- Sharing is our responsibility
- Do not assume others know what you need
- Choose to be healed

6. Help Others
- Memorialize
- Do more than expected
- Volunteer

7. Rise Above Bitterness
- Bitterness displaces blame
- Grudges deplete energy
- Forgive self and others

8. Expect to Regress
- Grief is erratic
- Special times can be hard

9. Maintain Physical Strength
- Have healthy eating and sleeping habits
- Run, play, and participate in sports
- Find ways to relax

10. Deal With Your Needs and Immediate Problems
- Decide what your needs are
- Seek healthy ways to meet your needs

"Ways to Help With Grief,"July 2008

Newly bereaved: You will experience a wide and often frightening variety of emotions after this loss. These feelings and experiences are natural and normal. Here are some you may encounter:

- Profound sadness.
- Crying all the time or at unexpected times.
- Extreme physical exhaustion, or a manic energy.
- Difficulty sleeping, or sleeping all the time.
- Lack of appetite, or over eating, often accompanied by weight loss or weight gain.
- Anxiety, often manifested in overprotective behavior toward surviving family members.
- Denial of the loss.
- Inability to concentrate, frequently misplacing items and forgetting things.
- A deep longing and emptiness, feeling that nothing has meaning.
- Intense questioning: “Why??” “If only I had….?” “Why didn’t I…?”
- Looking for blame, and blaming yourself or others.
- Anger with yourself, family members, medical personnel, God, even the deceased.
- Fearing that you are mentally ill or unstable.
- Physical symptoms such as heaviness in your chest, difficulty breathing, tightness in your throat, yawning, sighing, gasping or even hyperventilating (do not hesitate to see a doctor for symptoms that concern you).
- Inability to function at work.

- Increased intensity of, or sudden loss of, religious faith.
- Wanting to die (a feeling that usually subsides over time as you realize the value of staying present for other loved ones).
- Needing to tell and retell the story of your loved one's death.
- Sensing the presence of your loved one in an odor or touch.
- Difficulty in everyday tasks that remind you of your loved one, such as seeing his or her favorite foods on the shelves when grocery shopping.
- Anger with yourself if you smile or laugh, and wondering how you can feel happy when your loved one is dead.
- Feeling as though your spouse or other family members don't understand your grief or are not grieving as you think they should.
- Losing old friends who don't seem to understand your pain and grief.
- Making new connections with people who have also experienced the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild.
- Feeling "stuck" in an aspect of grief such as denial or anger.
- Feeling as though your work through grief is "one step forward, two steps back" or proceeding in a completely random way.
- Frustration with others who expect you to be "over this" in a specific time frame – perhaps even frustration with yourself if you feel you should have "moved on."

•Bereaved Parents of the USA

Hold these three important ideas in your mind as you walk this unfamiliar and challenging path:

There are no timetables for grief.
The bereaved do not process through “stages” in an orderly and predictable fashion. No one will be “done” with grief; by contrast, you will process the grief individually and at your own pace, folding it into your life in a way that becomes more manageable over time.

Grief must be addressed.
This grief cannot be avoided, ignored, or put away. You must go through it in order to emerge on the other side. As much as you may not be able to believe it now, your grief will shift and become less all-consuming as time goes by, and you will smile and find joy again. But right now you must follow your instincts and allow your heart, mind, and body to grieve.

Grieving requires patience and acceptance.
Grief work from the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild is a slow process. Be gentle and patient with yourself and your family. Allow yourself to cry, to grieve, and to retell stories as often as needed and for as long as you need to. You will never forget your loved one; he or she will be with you in your heart and memories for as long as you live.

• Bereaved Parents of the USA

For more information
239-624-4033
info@safehealthychildren.org
SafeHealthyChildren.org

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