



GriefTalk Newsletter

Family Trauma Advocacy Program

"You Don't Have to Walk Alone"

Betty Major-Rose
Founder/Executive Director

Who Are We: The Family Trauma Advocacy Program is a not-for-profit organization that utilizes trained volunteers to offer support to families who have lost a loved one to a violent death.

Mission: The mission of FTAP is S.E.E.E- to Support, Encourage, Educate, and Empower homicide survivors, in hopes of eliminating feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, and leading families toward a healthy recovery.

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July-September 2013

Message From the Editor

Understanding Grief and the Dangers

Grief is normal, but not easy. It involves a complex of emotions or group of emotions which involve your strongest, deepest feelings. Grief is generally resolved by mourning (how you express, act, or respond to your grief), a process that is commonly referred to as "grief work." Work is a valid term because in order to get to a place where you can say good bye, see hope for the future, and begin to reconstruct your life you must "work" toward it, and unfortunately this process cannot be rushed.

Grief does not have set rules, nor is there a right or wrong way to grieve. Each individual grieves in his or her own way, and not everyone's grief is identical. You will share some similarities with others, but grieving is a personal and individual experience. How you grieve depends on you-your personality, your faith, your experiences, your coping ability, the relationship you had with your loved one, and the nature of the loss.

After a loss, you may experience difficult and surprising emotions, such as anger, bitterness, guilt, fear, and such. While these feelings can be frightening and overwhelming, they are normal reactions to a loss. Accepting them as part of the grieving process and allowing yourself to work through them is necessary for healing. The key is to express and release your feelings in a healthy way. Managing your grief in such a way will ultimately result in a better quality of life.

There is no timetable on grief. Simply, healing takes time and for some it is longer than others. The question is not how long, but rather are you allowing yourself to grieve? **The danger comes when you don't allow yourself to grieve.** Denying or suppressing your feelings only prolongs or delays the healing process. The feelings are there "welling-up," just waiting to come out and eventually they do; however, in disguise. As a result, behaviors begin to change such as excessive drinking, drug abuse, outbursts of violence, and such. Additionally, there may be increased feelings of depression, suicidal thoughts, and strained relationships.

Remember, **the only way you can heal is to grieve.** It is a healthy and necessary response to your loss and nature's way of helping you heal. Healing can only take place when you deal with the pain and work through it-be patient with yourself and allow yourself time. You can get through it!

Kim Ford
Editor

Court Justice



Victim: Brandy Ford

The Ford family received justice on January 20, 2010. The offender received a sentence of 80 years and must serve 100% of that sentence.

If you received court justice and would like to share it with other survivors, please email us your loved one's name, age, the charges, the date of justice, the sentence, and a brief synopsis of the crime to ftaprogram@comcast.net. In the subject line please type "Court Justice."

Words of Encouragement

"When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on."

- Franklin D. Roosevelt

During this time in your life where things are chaotic and confusing, it is very important that you remember to take care of yourself. The following are suggestions to help you during your journey to a healthy recovery. Be patient with yourself. Grief is a process that takes time to work through. Take it one day at time. Allow yourself to grieve. Express your emotions whenever you feel a need to do so without apologies. Expressing your grief will help you feel better and aid you in a healthy recovery.

Self-Care

Get Rest

Grief is physically exhausting. Try to maintain your regular sleeping pattern. If you have trouble sleeping, develop a bedtime routine that will aid you in falling asleep, such as reading, journaling, taking a warm bath, and such. Also, take it easy. Try not to take on new tasks, and put off doing previous tasks if it does not need your immediate attention.

Try to Eat a

Healthy Meal

Your health is important. Working through your grief is exhausting mentally, physically and emotionally. Taking care of your self will help you get through this difficult time. You may not have an appetite, but try and eat something. If you cannot eat a meal in one sitting, then eat smaller portions throughout the day. Try and make them healthy, and by doing so it will give you a greater nutritional value. Also, make sure to drink plenty of fluids.

Exercise

During this time of grief, it is suggested that you find an activity that will help you relieve stress. Exercise is a great stress reliever. You can go for walks, jog, ride a bike, go swimming, etc.

Warning

Avoid the use of drugs and/or alcohol in an effort to take away, relieve, or numb your pain and stress. This will only delay the healing the process.

Plan

Plan something special for yourself - nothing elaborate. By doing this, it will provide you with something to look forward to.



A Survivor's Story

By Devynn A. Cerda

Danny's Father Cardale was murdered when he was a baby. The following are the words of a family member touched by what his family has to live through.

Why I Want Guns Out of My Life

Guns don't just kill they hurt forever. My family and I have a pain in our hearts that will hurt forever. In 1996, Cardale Romaro Cerda was killed due to gun violence. My cousin Cardale was 18 years old, a loving son to his parents and a new father to my second cousin Danny, who was only a baby when his father was killed. Sometimes I think about how that one day, that one person, that one gun hurt so many people and how they will hurt forever.

I feel sadness for my aunt Joyce when Mother's Day comes, because her only child is gone, a single bullet took his life away, from her and so many who loved him. I can see the hurt and pain my aunt and uncle feel when they think about him. I ask myself what did that single bullet from that gun do that day. It took away years of hugs, years of kisses, years of "I love you" to and from his parents, and his own son. It took away pride his parents would have felt watching him graduate from high school the same year he was killed. It took away the joy of planning his wedding some day. It took away his future. It only took one bullet from one gun to cause a life time of hurt.

My heart fills with tears as I watch my cousin Danny when we listen to the stories of his father's life. I realize that Danny will only know of his father through pictures and stories, not by his own memories. No special memories for my cousin Danny with his father because of a gun. There are many hurtful loses my cousin Danny has had and many more to come. When Danny took his first steps his father was not there to pick him up. When Danny fell from his two-wheeler for the first time his father was not there to encourage him to try again. Danny's father was not there last month when we went to our first Cubs baseball game together, because a gun took Danny's father away. When Danny gets older and has a child of his own they won't have a grandpa Cardale's lap to sit on. Guns don't just kill they hurt forever.

I was two years old when Cardale was killed. I did not know him well, but I do know he was someone I could look up to. Now I can't because a gun took my cousin away from me too.

We will never know what great things Cardale Romaro Cerda could have done for his son, his parents, his friends, for a corporation, for our country or even the world.

Not just my family feels hurt and pain from that gun. There is also the hurt felt by the family of the person who killed my cousin. The disappointment, they lost their son too, because he is in jail. His chance for happiness is gone too.

All this lost and hurt over a gun



GriefTalk will be remembering loved ones quarterly, by listing their name, their birthdate, and the anniversary of their death. If you would like your loved one to be a part of the “Remembering...” page, please submit the above information to ftaprogram@comcast.net.

Call for Submissions

Have a story you would like to share with other survivors? Do you have a poem that will inspire, or a testimony, or words of encouragement that will uplift a broken heart? We want to hear from you. Also, if you would like to share the outcome of your trial or have an upcoming trial date, have information regarding a support group, or an up-coming event; submit a copy of any of the above for review to be included in future issues of *GriefTalk* go to www.ftaprogram.org and click on “Newsletter Forms” under Forms.

Family Trauma Advocacy Program

The Family Trauma Advocacy Program is a not-for-profit organization that depends largely upon donations and partnerships.

If you would like to support our efforts by making a tax-deductible donation, please make check payable to:

Family Trauma Advocacy Program
P.O. Box 7025 Romeoville, IL 60446
or online at: www.ftaprogram.org

**MAKE A
DONATION**



GriefTalk

Family Trauma Advocacy Program

GriefTalk is designed to educate, empower, and inform surviving family members of violent crime victims.

Need Someone to Talk to?

If you have lost a loved one to a violent crime and need someone to talk to, a Family Trauma Advocate is available. Please call 800-707-2018.

Submitters

Thank you for sharing your story with the FTAP family.

Devynn A. Cerda

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GriefTalk is published quarterly by the Family Trauma Advocacy Program.

All submissions will be reviewed for publication.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Family Trauma Advocacy Program.

