



## **Key Findings: Comfort Zone Camp General Population Survey\***

### **Childhood Bereavement Is Far More Common Than Many of Us Think**

- 1 in 9 Americans lose a parent before age 20; 1 in 7 will lose a parent or sibling before age 20
- Almost half of survey respondents (48%) report having a close friend, relative or co-worker who lost a parent growing up; 58% believe that he and/or she still struggles with their loss today

### **The Impact of Childhood Loss Is Profound and Enduring**

- 56% of respondents who lost a parent growing up would trade a year of their life for one more day with their departed parent
- 72% believe their life would have been “much better” if their parent hadn’t died so young
- 69% of Americans who lost a parent growing up still think about their parent frequently
- Nearly six in ten (58%) of Americans who lost a parent as a child – and 34% of those who lost a sibling – said that the experience was “the hardest thing (they’ve) ever had to deal with”
- But there is some benefit: 81% of those who lost a parent as a kid say they are equally or more resilient than most adults and 59% think they became stronger as a result of their loss

\*Poll of 1,006 adults conducted via the Internet between November 24th and December 7th, 2009 by the national polling firm of Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc. All respondents were at least 25 years of age. The margin of error for the poll is  $\pm 3.2\%$ . Of the 1,006 adults surveyed, 110 had lost a parent before the age of 20, and 52 had lost a sibling (13 had lost both). Greenwald then surveyed an additional 298 adults who had lost a parent growing up, for a total over-sample of 408 (110 + 298). The margin of error for the 408 adults who lost a parent before the age of 20 is  $\pm 4.6\%$ .



### **Women Tend to Bear the Brunt—as Kids and as Caregivers**

- 3 out of 4 times women are the surviving parent – and responsible for managing a household, family finances, and their kids’ well-being, all the while trying to process their own loss
- Among adults who lost a parent growing up, close to two out of five women (38%) strongly agreed with the statement that “Losing a parent as a kid was the toughest thing I’ve ever had to deal with”; by comparison, 29% of men strongly agreed
- While more than half of all men who lost a parent growing up (57%) agreed with the statement that “Death is a part of life; people need to get over it,” only 36% of women who lost a parent growing up agreed

### **Friends/Neighbors Have A Critical Role to Play – and Opportunity to Do More**

- Adults who lost a parent growing up say that next to immediate family, friends were the most helpful in helping them cope with their loss
- Thinking back to the last time someone close lost a child or spouse, most respondents reported attending the funeral/wake (74%), offering words of condolence (72%) or visiting the family’s home (57%), but less than one-third (30%) said they went out of their way to include them in social activities
- 83% somewhat or strongly agree with the statement: “I wish I did/could have done more”
- Lack of awareness? Nearly four in 10 Americans surveyed (37%) believe there are “plenty of resources for kids who have lost a parent or sibling”; 18% had no opinion

☞ A source of help: Comfort Zone Camp has developed a dedicated website—**www.hellogrief.org**—offering information, expertise and guidance for kids and families in grief and the friends, relatives, communities, coworkers, counselors and others who care and want to help. The site includes a wide range of articles on grief, an on-line social networking community, a bulletin board, a bereavement reference section and a camp referral function.