

## Bereavement Support Package

Contents:	Page
• What is Grief and Bereavement .....	2
• Realistic Expectations for Yourself .....	3
• Emotions .....	4
• Looking After Your Health .....	5
• The Different Ways We Deal with Loss .....	7
• Grief: Understanding Your Reactions .....	8
• Grief: Coping with Your Challenges .....	11
• Things to Tell People Who Are Not Grieving .....	14
• Grief and Loss Support Services Offered by Crossroads Hospice Society ....	15
• Grief Counselling and Support Services Resource List .....	17
• Online Resources on Grief .....	21



*“A labyrinth is symbolic of the journey to the center of ourselves”*

## What is Grief and Bereavement?

Bereavement is the state of having experienced a loss through death. Grief is the internal response to loss, which is characterized by a variety of emotions.

Grief is initially experienced and described as a kind of “numbness” that comes over a person. Shock and denial are will hit in varying degrees and must experience before a person begins what is usually called “grief work”. Once the acknowledgement of the death comes, the therapeutic process of grieving begins. There is no way around it. Grieving is nature’s way of re-healing and re-establishment after the loss of a loved one. Because grief is something that is so personal, it can’t be avoided by ignoring it or by frantic activity.

Grief is not only a psychological reaction, it also manifests itself in physical reactions such as fatigue, having or showing little or no interest in anything; restlessness, unaccountable aches and pains, lack of appetite, etc. The combination of the physiological and the intellectual responses can be seen in the reaction of the bereaved in their dreams.

Grief is highly complex but a normal reaction to death. It affects each person differently. Mourning is the shared, social response to loss, or “grief gone public”. Mourning takes our internal grief and externalizes it in the form of an action, a symbol, a ceremony, or a ritual that activates social support. Mourning is essential for creating forward movement in a state of grief. Without external mourning, grief is not able to be expressed (Dr. Alan Wolfelt, 2016). While reactions are wide and varied, studies show that many bereaved people benefit from participation in a bereavement group where they may express their feelings of grief, share their experiences and help one another.

*Adapted from British Columbia Bereavement Helpline, 2004.*

# Realistic Expectations for Yourself

During the grieving process, you can expect:

- Your grief will take longer than most people think it should.
- Your grief will take more energy than you can imagine.
- Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life and who you are. It will impact your social relationships, your health, thoughts, feelings and spiritual beliefs.
- Your grief will depend upon how you perceive the loss.
- You will grieve for many things (both symbolic and tangible), not just the death itself.
- You will grieve for what you have lost already as well as for the future: for the hopes, dreams and unfulfilled expectations you held for and with the person who died.
- Your grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions: some expected and some not.
- This loss will resurrect old losses, feelings and unfinished business from your past.
- You may have some confusion about who you are. This is due to the intensity and unfamiliarity of the grieving experience and uncertainty about your new role in the world.
- You may have a combination of anger and depression, irritability, frustration and intolerance.
- You may feel guilty in some form.
- You may have a poor sense of self-worth.
- You may experience spasms, waves or acute upsurges of grief that occur without warning.
- You will have trouble thinking and making decisions: poor memory and organization.
- You may feel like you are going crazy.
- You may be obsessed with the death or preoccupied with thoughts of the dead person.
- You will search for the meaning in your life and question your beliefs.
- You may find yourself acting differently.
- Society has unrealistic expectations about your mourning and some people may respond inappropriately.
- You will have several physical reactions.
- Certain dates, events, seasons and reminders will bring upsurges in your grief.
- Certain experiences later in life may resurrect intense feelings of grief for you.

*Adapted from How to go on Living When Someone You Love Dies, T. Rando.*

## Emotions

When someone important to you dies, you grieve. Whenever you have any kind of loss, you need to grieve the disappearance from your life.

Grief means you have many reactions in widely contrasting combinations. These are healthy responses to loss and an important part of your grieving process.

You will be very aware of strong, often mixed emotions after a death or loss. These may come and go like waves washing over you. The intensity of your emotions may be new for you, perhaps frightening or overwhelming.

Some of the emotions may be like the ones mentioned here, others may be different. You move through your grief in your own way and at your pace.

### In the Beginning

You may be in shock. You are bewildered, literally stunned. *"I feel like a spectator in a play. But the drama is about me and the person I loved."* You may feel numb all over, almost paralyzed in a world of unreality.

You don't want to believe it. *"It's a bad dream. When I wake up, I'll find it really didn't happen."* Denial is when you secretly think or pretend your loved one will return, and life will go on as before. It is so strange. You feel as if the death has not really occurred, even though you know it has. Many people need time before they can face the harsh truth. It is so hard to realize that in your lifetime you will never see or touch that person again.

Panic may set in and questions may arise: *"What will happen to me? Will I be able to make it alone? Why can't I get hold of myself?"* You feel like you are losing control, panicking over things you used to do with confidence, *"If only I could run away, somewhere, anywhere!"*

### Later

Emotional pain often brings physical distress. For example, inside your chest you may feel a sharp pain, as if a jagged rock is pressed against your ribs. You collapse, exhausted, into bed but can't sleep. Food may have little taste for you. You eat only because you think you should. Or else, you cannot stop eating. Your stomach may be tied in knots. Your back may be hurting. The pain is not imagined, it is real. Your body is feeling your emotional loss.

Many people become angry when someone close to them dies. *"Why me?" "Why her?" "What did I do to deserve this?"* Hostility is one of the most difficult emotions to handle. Many of us are taught as children that anger is an unacceptable feeling and we learn to hold it inside from a very early age. But the feelings of rage do not magically go away.

Expressing your anger helps you release your anguish and frustrations. A life that was precious to you has been taken away and there is nothing you can do about it. Resentment is a normal part of the grief process.

You may feel guilty or angry with yourself. You might keep saying to yourself. *"If only I had spent more time with him, if only I had been more understanding, if only I had called the doctor sooner, if only I had done this, if only I had done that..."*

Know that this is a common feeling and it will soften as you are able to remember what you did achieve. Remember that this is now in the past and guilt will not bring the person who died back to you.

Guilt may result in depression. You may feel alone, naked, unprotected. There could be a sickening feeling of going down, down, down. You may feel overwhelmed and drained. *"Nothing matters anymore. Nothing. Life will never be worth living...Am I going crazy?"*

### Finally

In time, your emotions will become less intense, less overwhelming and more hopeful. As you are ready, you will begin to re-invent your energy in the outside world and start to feel like a "new" normal.

# Looking After Your Health

When you are grieving, it is important to look after your physical well-being as well as your emotional well-being. This is often forgotten or ignored when you're under stress and can have a great influence on your emotional healing after major loss.

Your eating and sleeping patterns may change, and so may your overall general health. The following information is intended to help you find ways to take care of your physical health while you are grieving. Remember, everyone's needs are different.

## Sleep

Your sleep patterns will probably change during grief. While most people have trouble sleeping, some do sleep more. Dreams and nightmares are also part of the grieving process - a way of 'working through' tough concerns and feelings.

### Some Suggestions for You:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Only use your bedroom for sleeping at night; nap in another room
- Keep the room temperature warm, rather than hot or cold.
- Drink only herbal teas or decaffeinated beverages for a least five hours before bedtime. Soft drinks, coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate and Anacin all contain caffeine and may cause insomnia
- Exercise daily, but not close to bedtime.
- Even though alcohol, cigarettes and heavy meals may make you feel sleepy, they can cause insomnia. Once they are out of your system, you wake up.
- Medication to help your sleep can be prescribed by a Physician. Sleeping medication can help break the pattern but remember your insomnia will pass.
- Discuss your anxieties with an understanding friend or family member or write them down in a journal. Counselling will help you deal with ongoing grief difficulties.
- Don't keep busy right up to bedtime. Take 30 minutes to prepare and unwind before you get into bed. Hot milk contains amino acid that helps induce sleep. A warm bath can be soothing and reading a 'light' book can give you something else to think about. Relaxation exercises or listening to gentle music also helps prepare you for sleep; watching television in bed will not.
- A prime cause of insomnia is the fear that you won't get to sleep; tell yourself you will have a good, restful sleep.
- Try curling up with a pillow or soft stuffed animal, lie on your side with a pillow behind your back, use earplugs or a pillow over your exposed ear to block out sounds.
- Don't try to force sleep. Use mind games (count sheep, recall a pleasant time, plan a trip, plot a novel). If unsuccessful after 30 minutes, get up and do something pleasant and relaxing.
- If the bedroom has too many memories, sleep temporarily in another room, rearrange furniture or redecorate, sleep on your partner's side of the bed.

## Eating

Your appetite and eating patterns may change during grief. You could have no appetite at all or you could be constantly hungry. Food may be tasteless. Mealtimes may be difficult; the 'empty chair' reminds you that the person is no longer here and enjoying food without your loved one leaves you feeling guilty, etc.

Poor nutrition can result in headaches, digestive problems, feeling fatigued or rundown.

## Suggestions

If eating alone is difficult, try changing where you eat or where you sit at the table. Do not choose this time to go on a diet but do pay close attention to what you eat and drink.

Breakfast is important because it produces the energy you need to face the day's tasks. Good breakfast foods are high in protein and low in sugar – milk, yogurt, whole grain cereal, breads, lean meats, and eggs.

While protein enhances your energy and concentration level, high sugar intake causes fatigue and too many fatty foods can create serious health problems.

- Limit fatty meats and eat more chicken and fish.
- Use 1% or skim milk, margarine and polyunsaturated oils.
- Use low fat cooking methods (steaming, broiling and poaching).
- Eat vegetables, fruit, breads, rather than candy or baked goods.
- Choose packaged and restaurant foods carefully, as they can be high in fat and sugar.

Keep healthy snacks available, especially if you find yourself eating a lot.

Try some of these snack ideas:

- Dried or fresh fruits
- Fig Newtons
- Orange juice
- Popcorn
- Granola

## General Health

You will have several different physical reactions to grief and it is important to understand what is happening. You are also HIGH RISK for illness, so have regular check-ups and consult your Family Physician about any problems.

## Suggestions

- Be careful about driving; poor concentration and 'blinking out' are dangerous.
- Poor nutrition leaves you susceptible to disease, as well as weakened bone and muscle strength.
- Poor energy is to be expected. Allow yourself to slow down and let go of some responsibilities for a time.
- Regular exercise is essential; even a walk around the block helps.
- Be careful with drugs and alcohol, as they tend to mask grief reactions rather than deal with the pain. Alcohol is a depressant.
- Palpitations, digestive problems, chest pains, shortness of breath are all normal reactions to grief, but it is important to contact your doctor and have them checked out anyway.

*Remember, now is the time to take care of your body, as well as your mind. Good health will help you achieve a more balanced life.*

# The Different Ways We Deal with Loss

## BEHAVIOURS

You may find it **HELPFUL** to:

Talk about it  
Treat yourself to something special  
Cry, laugh  
Go to the beach, park, etc.  
Have a hot bath  
Keep busy, go out  
“Escape” for a while (rest, vacation)  
Read, learn more about your situation  
Be with friends

You may find it **UNHELPFUL** to:

Not talk about it  
Do reckless things  
Drink, do drugs  
Smoke (more)  
Rush around all the time  
Look for a replacement

## FEELINGS

You may find it **HELPFUL** to:

Write or draw how you're feeling  
Accept and express them  
Get counseling help

You may find it **UNHELPFUL** to:

Keep emotions inside  
Get stuck  
Take it out on others

## THOUGHTS

You may find it **HELPFUL** to:

Think about the good and bad times  
Try to find humour  
Draw on past experiences  
Hope for the best, plan for the future

You may find it **UNHELPFUL** to:

Refuse to think about it  
Try to forget  
Always daydream

## PHYSICAL

You may find it **HELPFUL** to:

Exercise, relax, have a massage  
Eat and sleep properly  
See your Doctor about problems

You may find it **UNHELPFUL** to:

Sit around  
Eat or sleep too much or too little  
Take pills for grief

## BELIEFS

You may find it **HELPFUL** to:

Pray  
Re-examine beliefs and values  
Search for the meaning in your life

You may find it **UNHELPFUL** to:

Reject or blame God and others indefinitely  
Completely lose faith or trust

# Grief: Understanding Your Reactions

When someone important to you dies, you grieve. This means you may experience a wide range of responses, often over an extended period. The following three sections generally coincide with early, middle and later grief, though variation and overlap of these phases is common.

## When a death occurs

As you accept the fact of the death of someone important to you, you will feel shock, numbness and disbelief. Panic and strong physical and emotional reactions are common.

## Adjusting to loss

Later, as the numbness subsides, you will deal with what this loss means to you and the emotional pain of grieving. The intensity of feelings may surprise or frighten you, but it is natural and can be resolved as you move through it.

## As life goes on

As you adjust to life without the person who died, you will begin to re-establish connections with the world around you. You will have more energy for family and friends, work and other interests.

Grief may be somewhat familiar, or it may be a new, uncertain endeavor. It is not an easy journey, and there may be times when you want more support than is available through your social network.

## The Grief Journey

### When a death occurs

*Walking the edges*

#### SOCIAL

- Withdrawal from others
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others
- Poor judgement about relationships

#### PHYSICAL

- Shortness of breath
- Digestive upsets
- Low energy, weakness and restlessness

#### EMOTIONAL

- Crying, sobbing and wailing
- Indifference and emptiness
- Outrage and helplessness

#### MENTAL

- Confusion, forgetfulness and poor concentration
- Denial and daydreaming
- Constant thoughts about the person who died and/or the death

#### SPIRITUAL

- Blaming God or life
- Lack of meaning, direction or hope
- Wanting to die or join the person who died

#### WHAT HELPS

- Pace yourself moment to moment
- Make no unnecessary changes or life changing decisions
- Talk about the person and the death
- Use practical and emotional supports

## Adjusting to loss

### *Entering the depths*

#### **SOCIAL**

- Rushing into new relationships
- Wanting company but unable to ask
- Continued withdrawal and isolation
- Self-consciousness

#### **PHYSICAL**

- Changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Shortness of breath and palpitations
- Digestion upsets

#### **EMOTIONAL**

- Intense and conflicting emotions
- Magnified fear for self or others
- Anger, sadness, guilt, depression

#### **MENTAL**

- Sense of going crazy
- Memory problems
- Difficult to concentrate/understand
- Vivid dreams or nightmares

#### **SPIRITUAL**

- Trying to contact the person who died
- Sensing the presence of the person who died; visitations
- Continued lack of meaning

#### **WHAT HELPS**

- Recognize and express your emotions
- Acknowledge changes
- Understand grief and know that others experience similar responses

### *As life goes on*

### *Mending the heart*

#### **SOCIAL**

- More interest in daily affairs of self/others
- Ability to reach out and meet others
- Energy for social visit and events

#### **PHYSICAL**

- Physical symptoms subside
- Sleep pattern and appetites are more settled
- Gut-wrenching, emptiness lightens

#### **EMOTIONAL**

- Emotions are less intense
- Feeling of coming out of the fog
- More peace; less guilt



## MENTAL

- Increased perspective about the death
- Ability to remember with less pain
- Improved concentration and memory
- Dreams and nightmares decrease

## SPIRITUAL

- Reconnection with religious/spiritual beliefs
- Acceptance of death as part of the life cycle
- Life has new meaning and purpose

## WHAT HELPS

- To reflect on progress since death
- To begin envisioning a future
- To engage in new activities
- To establish new roles and relationships

## Grief: Coping with Challenges

The death of someone important to you brings many changes in your life. As you are adjusting and responding to these changes, there are challenges you will have to face. These could be about the death and the circumstances at the time, or about your grief and how you are coping. Here are some explanations and practical suggestions regarding challenges.

### Decision-Making

Decision-making can be difficult when you are grieving. This is especially true when your partner died, and you do not have the usual person there to discuss plans, share decisions and consider consequences. Your memory, concentration and perspective may be affected by grief, leaving you with little confidence at this time. Postpone major decisions, if you can, until you are feeling better able to handle them. If you must make major decisions, consult with an objective professional.

The following guidelines may help you tackle decision-making:

- Identify the problem and your goal precisely.
- List a variety of solutions, as many as you can think of.
- List the advantages and disadvantages of each solution.
- Outline the steps necessary for each solution.
- Consult an expert or trusted advisor who will be objective.
- Review all the information gathered and look for oversights.
- Make your choice.
- Follow through step by step.

### Financial Affairs

Settling an estate can be a complex and exhausting task. Learning unfamiliar skills for dealing with financial affairs can be overwhelming when you are actively grieving. You may need or want help with paying bills, investing money, and planning your financial future. Be aware of your vulnerability at this time in your grief journey. Be cautious and take your time about all financial decisions.

The following suggestions may help you with coping:

- Legal advice and assistance may be helpful with estate or other issues.
- Ask your bank for help.
- Seek the services of a qualified accountant or financial planner to assist you.
- Always use a well-respected individual or firm.
- Before making any major decisions or investments, even with known individuals, check your plans with your bank, your accountant, your lawyer, or the Better Business Bureau.

### Personal Effects

Dealing with the belongings of the person who died can be very emotional. You may want to delay it because you don't have the energy, you're not up to the decisions, or you are comforted by the familiar presence. There is no time when this must be done, so do it when you feel ready. Doing it a bit at a time may make it manageable.

Here are some helpful hints:

- Ask for help from a friend or family member.
- Sort things into categories: things to keep, things for family and friends, things for sale or charity and things to decide about later.

## Memories of Recent Events

Particularly in the early days of grief, you may find that you are frequently thinking about the circumstances of the illness and death. Recurring thoughts, about how the person looked or acted, about the care given, about what you and others did or didn't do, about how you heard the news. All those thoughts are common and natural. Repetition seems to help us come to terms with difficult or stressful times. Although these memories are frequent now, memories of other times will return.

The following strategies may help with coping:

- Go over memories as often as you need to.
- Talk to someone about your thoughts.
- Get the information you need to understand what happened.

## Rooms and Places

There may be certain rooms or places that you wish to avoid because they are associated with the death of the person you lost. The courage required to face these places may return on its own accord. However, if your discomfort is intense and interfering with your day-to-day life, you may wish to seek counselling help.

The following strategies may help with coping:

- At home, sleep or eat elsewhere for a while, or rearrange the furniture.
- Away from home, if you need to go somewhere that is uncomfortable, get someone to accompany you or meet you.

## Changes in Relationships

You may find that some people have changed in the way they relate to you since the death. Their attitudes, responses and expectations may be different. They may not be as understanding and supportive of your grief as you would like them to be. Your own needs and responses may have also changed. Your energy or interest in social activities may be limited. Loneliness and longing may affect your comfort and composure in social situations.

Some suggestions for finding the support that you may want are offered here.

- Spend time with people who are "comfortable" and welcoming.
- Let people know what helps you (small groups, familiar people, quiet activities, etc.).
- Consider support groups for bereaved people.

## Special Dates and Events

The calendar is full of reminders of the person who died. Birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc. will be times for missing and thinking of the person, especially during the first year. Planning about how you want to acknowledge these times can be helpful.

Give yourself permission to do things differently and review the suggestions given here:

- Do what feels best for you at the time.
- Be alone or be with others.
- Go to the gravesite or another place where you feel close to the person who died. Find ways to honour your memories, work on a memorial album or journal.

## Dreams and Visitations

Many people have vivid dreams about the person who died, or hear, see or feel their presence. Often this is comforting, but occasionally it's not. You may be shy to share these experiences with others, but it is important to believe that your experience is real. Although grief experts say that most bereaved people have these experiences, some people long for a sense of presence and do not have it.

Some helpful strategies are listed below:

- If you are distressed about a dream or visitation, talk to a counsellor or spiritual advisor.
- Keep a journal or diary of your thoughts, dreams and experiences.
- Talk to a trusted friend.

## Things to Tell People Who Are Not Grieving

Dear (family, friend, employer...)

I've had a devastating loss. It will take me time, perhaps years, to heal the grief that has troubled me. For some time, it is quite possible that I will cry much more than usual. My tears do not signify weakness, a lack of hope or faith. They represent the depth of my loss and signify my convalescence.

Perhaps at times I will seem angrier than is apparently reasonable. The stress of grief tests the intensity of my emotions. Understand that this journey of healing drains my energy and often leaves me feeling frustrated. Pardon me if I seem irrational.

I need your understanding and your presence more than anything else. If you don't know what to say, touch me, hold me, but please let me know you care about me. Please, don't wait until I call you. I am often far too tired to even think of using the telephone to reach out for the help that I need.

Don't let me become a stranger to you. Over the next year or so, I will need your presence more than ever. What would be so helpful to me is if you could lend me your willing and supportive shoulder and ear without trying to tell me how or what I should be doing; let me be silent if I want to be or laugh and cry with me; offer to help with simple chores; most importantly continue to be my friend.

If perhaps you've experienced a loss like mine, share it with me. You will not hurt my feelings. Although my tears may well, I will be glad to hear the name of my loved one being used and your special memories of them too.

Thank you for thinking of me. Your consideration is a gift that I will appreciate forever.

*Adapted from Life After Loss by Bob Deits*

## Grief and Loss Support Services Offered by Crossroads Hospice Society

Many times, in our lives we feel alone. This is especially so when someone we love dies. Even though family and friends may be near, they may not understand just how we feel. Grief, like a wound, needs time to heal. The brief time given to attend a funeral is only the beginning of the healing process. Crossroads Hospice Society offers a supportive environment where you may continue to express your feelings. In our experience it is not uncommon to feel overwhelmed and detached from people who love you after a significant loss. Bereavement support can help reconnect you with your feelings of love for friends and relatives and your passion for life.

If you have suffered the loss of a loved one, it is important to know that you are not alone. Crossroads Hospice volunteers know that grief is painful, and grieving is hard work. They offer a listening ear and a caring heart to help support you as you journey through the grieving process.

Below is a description of the different individual and group support services we offer:

**Bereavement Information Packages** – A selection of articles which offer understanding and reassurance about the experience of grieving. These packages are sent to you during the first year of bereavement.

**Lending Library** – Crossroads Hospice has a wide range of books about grief and bereavement available for loan from our library.

**One-to-One Volunteer Support** – Individual support is available for those waiting for placement in a group or prefer individual support. Hospice volunteers offer support either by phone or visits at our office.

**Memory Album/Art Care** – Our memories can be as precious as gold and act as balm to our souls. A wonderful way to remember a loved one is the creation of a memory book through the art of scrapbooking. With an emphasis on “telling the story”, scrapbooking techniques are used to quickly, simply and easily create a celebration of lives and events.

**Walking and Healing** – Our Grief’s Journey Walking Group, held Fridays in Port Moody, is open to bereaved individuals who have lost a loved one to death. It is a time to walk and talk, at a relaxed pace, with others who are sharing this experience. This program combines informal support with fresh air and exercise.

**Monthly Drop-In Groups** – Individuals over the age of 19 are welcome to attend this informal gathering of those who are experiencing grief due to the death of a loved one. We offer a gentle, understanding and safe environment to those seeking support. Day and evening support group are offered once a month.

**Compassionate Adult Grief Support Group** – In the safety of a group, bereaved people can share and learn from others, who have also experienced death of a loved one. Groups meet once a week for 8 weeks to explore and express thoughts and feelings associated with their personal grief. Evening programs are offered throughout the year.

**Compassionate Teen Grief Support Group** – The purpose of this program is to help adolescents develop positive coping skills and behaviours for dealing with the grief associated with the loss of a significant relationship. Participants benefit from gathering with others and sharing their experience(s) with loss in a supportive environment. This program is designed for adolescents between the ages of 13 and 19 years who have experienced the loss of someone special through death.

For more information on any of these services or to arrange for an appointment, please contact our Bereavement Services Coordinator at 604-949-2274 or [Support@crossroadshospice.org](mailto:Support@crossroadshospice.org)

We chose the image of the labyrinth as a metaphor for the journey through grief. A labyrinth is not a maze as there are no dead ends and no wrong turns. There is only one way – forward. So it is with grief. The only way through is forward, with many turns and going back and forth over what seems like the same territory. We journey to the center of our grief, to the center of ourselves, and then slowly return to re-enter the world.

Each person's experience on the journey of grief will be different. This reflects our personal style, our relationship with the person who died, our internal and social resources, and our history of coping. As you journey through your own grief process, there will likely be unexpected turns and insights.

## COMMUNITY GRIEF & LOSS SUPPORT SERVICES

If you or someone you know has concerns or questions about grief, please contact us.

Mailing Address:

Crossroads Hospice Society  
Box 504 34A – 2755 Lougheed Hwy  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3B 5Y9

Phone: 604-949-2274

Email: [Support@CrossroadsHospice.org](mailto:Support@CrossroadsHospice.org)

[www.CrossroadsHospiceSociety.com](http://www.CrossroadsHospiceSociety.com)

Charitable Registration No. 894850635 RR0001



*“A labyrinth is symbolic of the journey to the center of ourselves”*

Crossroads Hospice Society's Bereavement Services are funded through the generosity of our community, and we acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.  
There are no fees for teen and adult grief and loss support services.

# Grief Counselling and Support Services Resource List

## General Information and Referrals

### B.C. Bereavement Helpline

604-738-9950

Services: Offers helpline for emotional support. Connects you to grief support services such as support groups in the community. No Charge. [www.bcbh.ca](http://www.bcbh.ca)

## Bereavement Counsellors

### B.C. Association of Social Worker

604-730-9111

[www.bcasw.org](http://www.bcasw.org)

### B.C. Psychological Association

604-730-0522

[www.psychologists.bc.ca](http://www.psychologists.bc.ca)

### B.C. Association of Clinical Counsellors

1-800-909-6303

Fee can vary. Some practitioners may use a sliding scale. Ask about their rates before booking an appointment.

\* Check for coverage under Extended Medical Benefits. [www.bc-counsellors.org](http://www.bc-counsellors.org)

### Bridge to Life Ministries Services

604-941-0220

Christian Counselling Ministry. Fees by donation.

Offices in Mission and Coquitlam. [www.bridgetolife.ca](http://www.bridgetolife.ca)

### Family Services of Greater Vancouver

604-874-2938

Counselling fees based on household income. Program has a dedicated intake worker who can also refer to other counselling services or groups. Offices in Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, New West and Surrey. [www.fsgv.ca](http://www.fsgv.ca)

### Fraser River Counselling

604-513-2113

Offered at Trinity Western University campuses (Christian based organization). Fee: low cost and sliding scale.

Office in Langley. [www.fraserrivercounselling.ca](http://www.fraserrivercounselling.ca)

### Jewish Family Services Agency

604-637-3309

Offers counselling services for Jewish Community. Fees are sliding scale based on household income. Office located in Vancouver. [www.jfsa.ca](http://www.jfsa.ca)

### Living System Counselling

604-926-5496

Counselling fees based on household income. Provided by counsellor and intern. Offices in North Vancouver, Vancouver and New Westminster. [www.livingsystems.ca](http://www.livingsystems.ca)

### Living Through Loss Counselling

604-873-5013

Services: Offers weekly drop-in support group facilitated by a professional counsellor, one on one counselling and occasional close support groups. Fee: Drop-in by donation, closed groups may have a registration fee. Office located in Vancouver. [www.livingthroughloss.ca](http://www.livingthroughloss.ca)

### Moving Forward Family Services

778-321-3054

Counselling fees based on pay what you can. Provided by fully supervised interns by Registered Clinical Counsellors or Registered Social Workers. Counselling can be offered in different languages. Services offered in Abbotsford, Langley, Victoria, Surrey, White Rock and Vancouver. [www.movingforwardfamilyservices.com](http://www.movingforwardfamilyservices.com)

### New Westminster UBC Counselling Centre

604-525-6651

Free counselling for the public by counselling psychology graduate students - supervised by a psychologist.

Office in New Westminster. [www.ecps.educ.ubc.ca](http://www.ecps.educ.ubc.ca)

## SHARE Society

604-937-6969

Individual, couple and family counselling offered for a broad range of concerns. Fee: subsidized/lower fees available. Offices in Coquitlam and Port Moody. [www.sharesociety.ca](http://www.sharesociety.ca)

## Hospice Societies

### Abbotsford Hospice Society

604-852-2456

[www.abbotsfordhospice.org](http://www.abbotsfordhospice.org)

### Burnaby Hospice Society

604-520-5087

[www.burnabyhospice.org](http://www.burnabyhospice.org)

### Chilliwack Hospice Society

604-795-4660

[www.chilliwackhospice.org](http://www.chilliwackhospice.org)

### Crossroads Hospice Society

604-949-2274

[www.crossroadshospicesociety.com](http://www.crossroadshospicesociety.com)

### Delta Hospice Society

604-948-0660

[www.deltahospice.org](http://www.deltahospice.org)

### Langley Hospice Society

604-530-1115

[www.langleyhospice.com](http://www.langleyhospice.com)

### Mission Hospice Society

604-826-2235

[www.missionhospice.bc.ca](http://www.missionhospice.bc.ca)

### Ridge Meadows Hospice Society

604-463-7722

[www.ridgemedowshospicesociety.com](http://www.ridgemedowshospicesociety.com)

### Surrey Hospice Society

604-584-7006

[www.surreyhospice.com](http://www.surreyhospice.com)

### White Rock Hospice Society

604-531-7484

[www.whiterockhospice.com](http://www.whiterockhospice.com)

Hospice Societies offer emotional support, counselling, and volunteer visiting. Some also have a lending library. One-to-one support, grief counselling, and group support programs for adults. Some offer support for children. No charge. Donations appreciated.

## Additional Resources for Adults

### Lower Mainland Grief Recovery Society

604-696-1060

Services: Grief support groups and grief education. Open to anyone who has experienced loss. Services offered in Kerrisdale and Vancouver. [www.imgr.ca](http://www.imgr.ca)

### Providence Health Care

604-659-1160

Services: "Being with Grief" - one-time session, offered twice a month. Office at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver.

## Resources for Parents

### Compassionate Friends

Services: Drop-in support group for parents who have lost a child (at any age). Chapters around the province. No charge. [www.tcfcanada.net](http://www.tcfcanada.net)

Abbotsford 604-986-9954  
Burnaby 778-222-0446  
Mission 604-289-0097  
North Shore 604-619-2481/604-770-4570

Ridge Meadows 604-467-3971  
Surrey 604-536-6522  
Vancouver 604-298-7664

### Empty Cradle

604-525-4349

Services: Offers support groups for bereaved parents who have experienced pregnancy or infant Loss. No charge. Office in New Westminster. Email: [emptycradle@telus.net](mailto:emptycradle@telus.net)

## Resources for Children

### Camp Kerry

604-553-4663

Services: One-to-one counselling, bereavement retreats, support groups, online support community youth program. Office in New Westminster. [www.campkerry.org](http://www.campkerry.org)

### Canuck Place – Children’s Hospice

604-731-4847

Services: One-to-one counselling bereavement groups for parents and siblings Fee: No Charge. Located in Vancouver. [www.canuckplace.org](http://www.canuckplace.org)

### Charlene Reaveley

778-285-4673

Counselling and Resource Centre. Funding Bereavement counselling for children. Located in Port Coquitlam. [www.crcs.ca](http://www.crcs.ca)

### Langley Hospice Society

604-530-1115

Child and Youth Bereavement Support Services. Offers individual and group support for children, teens and families who have experienced the death of a loved one. No charge. Located in Langley. [www.langleyhospice.com](http://www.langleyhospice.com)

### Surrey Hospice Society

604-584-7006

Child, Youth and Family Counselling. Offers individual and group support for children, teens and families who have experienced the death of a loved one. No Charge. Office in Surrey. [www.surreyhospice.com](http://www.surreyhospice.com)

### Vancouver Hospice Society

604-737-7305 ext. 218

Children’s Grief and Family Support Program

Grief support for children who have experienced the death of a parent or another significant adult in their life. [www.vancouverhospice.org](http://www.vancouverhospice.org)

## Resources for Seniors

### W. H. O. (Widows Helping Others)

Services: Self-help support and social network for widows, providing practical information, drop-in sessions, lectures and outings. For woman 50+. No charge.

Abbotsford 604-853-1367  
Coquitlam 604-942-0558  
Langley 604-530-8480

Maple Ridge 604-467-6911  
Surrey 604-589-4634  
White Rock 604-531-4419

### Century House

604-519-1064

Seniors Peer Counselling [www.chspc.ca](http://www.chspc.ca)

### **Vital Connections**

**604-519-1064**

Services: Counselling and emotional support in New Westminster for people 50+ Free confidential counselling  
[www.fsgv.ca](http://www.fsgv.ca)

### **Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society**

**604-291-2258**

Services: Offers volunteer peer counselling and groups to support emotional well-being of senior's community.  
[www.bsoss.org](http://www.bsoss.org)

## **Resources for Suicide Survivors**

### **B.C. Bereavement Helpline**

**604-738-9950**

Services: Offers helpline for emotional support. Offers suicide loss and homicide loss support group in partnership with BC Crisis Center. No charge. Office located in Vancouver. [www.bcbh.ca](http://www.bcbh.ca)

### **CHIMO Community Services**

**604-279-7077**

Services: Adult crisis and suicide intervention counselling. [www.chimoservices.com](http://www.chimoservices.com)

### **Langley Hospice Society**

**604-530-1115**

Services: Offers Support Group for parents who have lost children by suicide or overdose. No charge. Office in Langley. [www.langleyhospice.com](http://www.langleyhospice.com)

### **Marlyn Ferguson (Valley View Funeral Home)**

**604-569-8866**

Services: Offers suicide loss and homicide loss peer support group. No charge. Office in Surrey.  
Email: [mferguson@arbormemorial.com](mailto:mferguson@arbormemorial.com)

### **S.A.F.E.R.**

**604-675-3700**

Support programs for suicide related deaths; critical incident debriefing; and one-to-one counselling with professionals. No charge. Services available for Vancouver residents only. [www.chimoservices.com](http://www.chimoservices.com)

## **Resources for Grief After a Substance Passing**

### **Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)**

**604-616-4800**

Services: Monthly peer to peer support group. No charge. For more information and to pre-register, contact Heather. Offices in Langley, Surrey and the Fraser Valley. Email: [hmullan@telus.net](mailto:hmullan@telus.net)

### **Langley Hospice Society**

**604-530-1115**

Services: Offers Support Group for parents who have lost a child by suicide or overdose. No charge. Office in Langley. [www.langleyhospice.com](http://www.langleyhospice.com)

### **Moms Stop the Harm**

**[www.momsstoptheharm.com](http://www.momsstoptheharm.com)**

Website provides list of local overdose survivor support groups.

### **Surrey Hospice Society**

**604-584-7006**

Services: Grief support group for those who have lost a loved one to overdose. The support group is facilitated by registered clinical counsellors. No charge. Office in Surrey. [www.surreyhospice.com](http://www.surreyhospice.com)

## **Resources for Grief After a Medical Assisted Death**

### **Bridge C-14**

**[www.bridgce14.org](http://www.bridgce14.org)**

Bridge C-14 offers compassionate support events and online forums for families and friends throughout their loved one's journey with MAID. See the event section for Lower Mainland meetup.

## 24-Hour Crisis Lines

Telephone lines for those in crisis and needing emotional support. Adult, Teens and Children. Seven (7) days a week. No charge.

Fraser Health Crisis Line	604-951-8855
Richmond & Delta	604-279-7070
Senior's Distress Line	604-872-1234
Vancouver & North Shore	604-872-3311
1-800-SUI-CIDE	1-800-734-2433

## Online Resources for Grief

**Canadian Virtual Hospice** [www.virtualhospice.ca](http://www.virtualhospice.ca)

An interactive network to support patient and families during life-threatening illness and loss. Online portal for learning about grief.

**Hospice Net** [www.hospicenet.org](http://www.hospicenet.org)

For patients and families facing life-threatening illness and loss. Online portal for learning about grief.

**Parents of Murdered Children** [www.pomc.com](http://www.pomc.com)

Online portal for learning about grief. To enter this site, choose "topic forum". There are many different bulletin boards with topics from grief to revenge. Note: This is an American site.

**The Shiva Foundation** [www.goodgrief.org](http://www.goodgrief.org)

Frequently-asked questions and answers about grief, information about grief resources.

**Widow Net** [www.fortnet.org/widownet](http://www.fortnet.org/widownet)

An information and self-help resource for, and by, widows and widowers who have survived the death of a spouse or life partner.

## Children and Teens

**Kids Grief** [www.kidsgrief.ca](http://www.kidsgrief.ca)

Online portal for helping families, professionals, volunteers, and communities supporting grieving children, youth and adults.

**SLAP'D** [www.slapd.com](http://www.slapd.com)

SLAP'D (Surviving Life After a Parent Dies) is a social media site for teens who have lost a parent. This online forum helps teens to connect and share their experiences with each other.

**Teens and Death** [www.teensanddeath.com](http://www.teensanddeath.com)

Online information and actions to help teens through grief.

**The Dougy Center** [www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)

The National Center for Grieving Children and Families based in the USA. Grief information for children, youth and their families.

**Winston's Wish (UK)** [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)

Online grief information and support for children and young people after the death of a parent or sibling.