

GRIEVING

Where to go when you're looking for help

What is grief?

Grief is a natural and necessary reaction to loss. People can experience grief when a person or pet dies, but grief can also be felt after any important loss, like the loss of a job, relationship or independence from a disability. It is also common to feel grief after being diagnosed with an illness or health problem.

Grief can cause strong, and sometimes overwhelming, feelings. Symptoms of grief can be similar to those of depression, except that symptoms of grief usually pass within a few months of the loss.

Grieving can also cause a range of reactions. Some people feel numb for the first month after a loss, when they have difficulty feeling any emotion. Or they may feel relief if the person who died was suffering. Grieving can elicit a stabbing pain that lessens, but doesn't completely disappear, with time.

Counselling and Support Services

Bereaved Families of Ontario – Toronto

355 Church St., Suite 202, Toronto, ON

Tel.: 416 440-0290

info@bfotoronto.ca

www.bfotoronto.ca

Services: Eight-week (weekly) bereavement support groups for parents, spouses, young adults and adults: open groups are held throughout the year; closed groups run at least three times a year

Eligibility: Age 18+, bereaved family and friends; must complete an intake before first group session

Fee: Free

Referral: Self-referral

If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please email the information to us at access.resources@camh.ca.

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Bereaved Families of Ontario

11 locations across Ontario, see website for details

www.bereavedfamilies.net

info@bereavedfamilies.net

Services: Six-week closed groups for adults, seven-week groups for children aged 4–13, one-day teen workshops for ages 13–19, one-on-one support, lending library that can mail out reading material on various topics; programs facilitated by trained volunteers who are grieving themselves

Eligibility: Age requirement varies by program

Fee: Free

Referral: Self-referral

Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services – HOPE Program

Tel.: 1 800 883-6094

hope-espoir@forces.gc.ca

<https://cfmws.ca/support-services/families/bereavement-grief>

Services: Support for military families that have lost a loved one

Eligibility: Military family members

Referral: Self-referral

Fee: Free

Catholic Family Services Toronto – New Beginnings Program

1155 Yonge St., Suite 200 (central Toronto office); 245 Fairview Mall Dr., Suite 201 (North Toronto office)

Tel.: 416 921-1163 ext. 2227

info@cfstoronto.com

www.cfstoronto.com/new-beginnings

Services: In-person and online drop-in support groups

Eligibility: Open to all

Fee: Sliding scale

Referral: Self-referral

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)

1400 Windsor Ave., Toronto; two other locations (Windsor and Kanata)

Tel.: 416 817-1591 (Toronto); 519 551-1455 (Windsor)

cagrasp@gmail.com (Toronto); graspwindsor@gmail.com (Windsor)

<https://grasphep.org/community/meetings/canada-chapters>

Services: Support for families or people with a loved one who died as a result of substance use or addiction; monthly or bi-weekly meetings

Eligibility: Open to all

Fee: Free

Referral: Self-referral

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Jewish Family and Child Service of Greater Toronto

4600 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON

Tel.: 416 638-7800 ext. 6215 (intake)

ssidney@jfandcs.com

www.jfandcs.com/bereavement

Services: Therapy and psychoeducational bereavement groups: general group, groups for widowed people over age 68, widowed people under age 68, people who lost a parent as an adult

Eligibility: 18+

Referral: Self-referral

Fee: \$100–\$120 per person, based on sliding scale

Notes: Groups are seasonal with concurrent weekly sessions. Moving from virtual to in-person meetings

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network

Five locations across Ontario, see website for details

pailsupport@sunnybrook.ca

<https://pailnetwork.sunnybrook.ca/programs-for-parents>

Services: Online and in-person peer support and one-to-one support for people who have experienced pregnancy and infant loss; various loss-specific and general programs

Eligibility: All families who have experienced infant death or pregnancy loss

Referral: Self-referral

Fee: Free

Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities

2660 Eglinton Ave. East, Scarborough, ON

Tel.: 416 642-9445

info@schcontario.thedev.ca

<https://schcontario.ca/programs/health-services/bereavement-care>

Services: Trained volunteers offer grief and bereavement support; individual and peer support

Eligibility: Anyone who lives in the Scarborough Health Network vicinity

Referral: Self-referral

Fee: Free

Soaring Spirits International

Tel.: 1 877 671-4071

contact@sslf.org

www.soaringspirits.org

Services: Support for widowed men and women; information, resources, discussion forum; Newly Widowed Program (online), regional social groups (in-person across Ontario), Widowed Village (online), Camp Widow (event), Widow's Voice Blog (online), Widowed Pen Pals (online)

Eligibility: Open to all

Referral: Self-referral

Fee: Depends on service; contact the organization for details

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Suicide and Bereavement

Canadian Mental Health Association – Bereavement Services Program

See website for locations in Middlesex, Ontario

Tel.: 519 434-9191 ext. 2244

grief@cmhatv.ca

<https://cmhatv.ca/find-help/bereavement-services-program>

Services: Support for people who have lost someone to suicide or substance use: one-on-one counselling (virtual, phone or in-person), 12-week support groups (currently in-person)

Eligibility: Age 16+ affected by death by suicide or substance use

Referral: Self-referral; intake and waitlist for groups while using one-on-one service if interested

Fee: 12 free one-on-one counselling sessions and free group sessions

Distress Centres of Greater Toronto – Suicide Loss Survivor Support

33 City Centre Dr., Suite 610, Mississauga, ON

Tel.: 416 595-1716

ashendelman@dcogt.com

www.dcoct.com/survivors-of-suicide-and-homicide-loss

Services: Individual (60–90 minutes) or group support (two hours) sessions, weekly for eight weeks; sessions offered online, via phone or in person (when possible)

Eligibility: Adult family members and friends who have lost someone to suicide or homicide

Referral: Self-referral

Fee: Free

Note: There may be a wait of up to four weeks after intake/registration

Children and Youth

Lighthouse Program

2522 Rebecca St., Oakville, ON

Tel.: 905 337-2333

info@lighthousegriefsupport.org

www.lighthousegriefsupport.org/how-we-can-help/support-groups

Services: In-person and online bereavement support programs for children and youth

Eligibility: Ages 3–10 (children) and youth

Referral: Call for an appointment

Fee: Free

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Regesh Family and Child Services

149 Willowdale Ave., lower level, Toronto, ON

Tel.: 416 495-8832

info@regesh.com

www.regesh.com

Services: Play-based therapy program for children coping with grief and loss, serious illness of a family member, adoption or foster care, bullying, abuse, violence, poor self-esteem

Eligibility: Ages 3–16

Referral: Call for an appointment

Fee: Sliding scale based on income

Hospice and Palliative Care

Canadian Virtual Hospice

info@virtualhospice.ca

www.virtualhospice.ca

Services: Information about palliative care associations, drug/benefit programs, home care programs, residential hospices, other programs and services

Dorothy Ley Hospice

220 Sherway Dr., Etobicoke, ON

Tel.: 416 626-0116 ext. 233

www.dlhospice.org/hospice-care/grief-bereavement-care/services

Services: End-of-life planning, individual and caregiver counselling, respite services

Hospice Palliative Care Ontario

2 Carlton St., Suite 808, Toronto, ON

www.hpcoco.ca/grief-and-bereavement-supports

Services: Information and links to Ontario-based grief and bereavement supports

Online Resources

See other listings on grief and bereavement provided by the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario:

www.cheo.on.ca/en/resources-and-support/grief-and-bereavement.aspx

Grief: [Understanding and coping with loss and grief](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario)

Suicide: [Hope and Healing After Suicide: A Practical Guide for People Who Have Lost Someone to Suicide in Ontario](#) (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2011)

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