

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. Normal symptoms of grief can be similar to those of depression, except that these symptoms normally pass within a few months of the loss.

Grieving can also cause a range of reactions. People often say they 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 has been suffering. Grieving can also elicit a stabbing pain that lessens, but doesn't completely disappear, with time.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross identified five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance; more recently her co-author, David Kessler, has added meaning as the sixth state. These stages aren't felt in any specific order, and they aren't the same for each person. People don't have to experience each stage, but if they do, how long and intensely they experience each stage will vary.

What are some options?

Many people process grief with the support of loved ones and other strategies for self-care. But some people many need extra support from a mental health professional. Grief counselling helps people through the unique difficulties of grief. Peer support groups and family therapy may also be helpful.

Bereaved Families of Ontario – Toronto

250 Merton St., Toronto, ON

www.bfotoronto.ca

416 440-0290

info@bfotoronto.ca

If any of this information is incorrect or outdated, or if there are additional organizations or programs that would be helpful to include, please e-mail the information to us at access.resources@camh.ca.

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camh

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

Eligibility: Bereaved family and friends; you must complete an intake before your first group

Referral: Self-referral

Bereaved Families of Ontario

12 locations across Ontario, see website for details

www.bereavedfamilies.net

info@bereavedfamilies.net

Services offered: Six-week closed groups for adults, seven-week groups for children four to 13, one-day teen workshops for ages 13 to 19, one-on-one support, lending library, reading material package on various topics can be mailed out; programs facilitated by trained volunteers who are grieving themselves

Eligibility: Ages four and older

Referral: Call the affiliate in your area: phone numbers and e-mails of each area office available on the website

Catholic Family Services Toronto

See website for locations

www.cfstoronto.com

416 921-1163 ext. 2227

Services offered: Parish-based peer support and counselling for bereavement, separation and divorce (New Beginnings)

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)

St. Bonaventure Church, 1300 Leslie St., North York, ON

grasphelp.org

647 274-3224

grasptoronto@gmail.com

Services offered: A community of help, compassion and understanding for families or individuals who have had a loved one die as a result of substance misuse or addiction; groups held Wednesdays from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Referral: Pre-registration is required for new attendees

Note: This is a non-denominational group; although it is in a church, it is not church-based

Jewish Family and Child

4600 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON

www.jfandcs.com/bereavement

416 638-7800 ext. 6234 (intake)

Services offered: Six-week bereavement groups: one for widows and widowers over the age of 65, another for widows and widowers under the age of 65 and a third for people who lost a parent as an adult

Eligibility: All are welcome

Fee: \$100 per person, but available on a sliding scale

Hospital-Based Counselling

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Most hospitals provide grief counselling through their spiritual care department.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

100 Stokes St., room 5274, Toronto, ON

416 535-8501 ext. 32175

Services offered: One-on-one grief counselling for clients and families

Referral: People who are not currently CAMH clients can be referred by their psychiatrist or GP if services are required for more than two or three sessions

Eligibility: Current CAMH clients or family members who have experienced a loss

Scarborough and Rouge Hospital

3050 Lawrence Ave. E., Scarborough, ON

www.rougevalley.ca

416 438-2911 ext. 5334

amuhia@tsh.to

Services offered: One-on-one support counselling during the grief and bereavement process, which is offered by a spiritual care practitioner who is also a psychotherapist

Eligibility: People who have experienced the death of a parent, partner, child or friend

Referral: Self-referral or referral through a doctor

Support Services

The HOPE Program

www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Families-of-the-Fallen/Shoulder-to-Shoulder.aspx

1 800 883-6094

hope-espoir@forces.gc.ca

Services offered: Program that provides confidential support to military families who have lost a loved one

Eligibility: Military family members

Referral: Self-referral

Soaring Spirits International

2828 Cochran St. #194, Simi Valley, CA

www.soaringspirits.org

877 671-4071

contact@sslf.org

Services offered: A widowed community offering widowed men and women understanding, friendship, inspiration and encouragement after the loss of a partner; provides information, resources, a widowed forum with 24/7 chat and forums, Camp Widow and a pen pal program

Eligibility: Contact them by phone or e-mail above

Turner & Porter: Community of People Extending Support (COPE)

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2357 Bloor St. W., Toronto, ON (and other locations in Mississauga and Etobicoke)

www.turnerporter.ca/resources/49-help-beyond-the-funeral.html

416 767-6793

Services offered: A six-week support group for people who have experienced the death of someone near to them, and then monthly group meetings for additional support

Eligibility: People over the age of 18

Referral: Call or go online to register

Fee: None

WoodGreen Community Services

815 Danforth Ave., main floor, Toronto, ON

www.woodgreen.org

416 645-6000 ext. 5260

Services offered: Individual and group bereavement support (includes service referral, service navigation and co-ordination when required) to individuals and families

Referral: Call to register

Fee: None

Suicide and Bereavement

CMHA Middlesex Suicide Bereavement Support

See website for locations in Middlesex

cmhamiddlesex.ca/programs-services/bereavement-support

519 434-9191 ext. 244

grief@cmhamiddlesex.ca

Services offered: Support by telephone or in-person (in Middlesex), including one-on-one counselling, support groups, workshops and education

Eligibility: People affected by death by suicide

Toronto Distress Centres, Survivor Support Program

10 Trinity Sq., Toronto, ON

www.torontodistresscentre.com/survivor-support

416 595-1716

alex@torontodistresscentre.com

Services offered: One-on-one counselling and support for individuals or families provided by trained and supervised volunteer teams, follow-up group meetings, telephone support, consultation and debriefing for professionals and community members affected by suicide or homicide

Eligibility: Adult family members and friends who have experienced a death by suicide or homicide

Referral: Self-referral

Note: Support sessions held at various locations, including in-home

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Children and Youth

Bereaved Families of Ontario – Toronto/What’s Up Walk-In

1200 Markham Rd., suite 200, Toronto, ON
416 440-0290

Services offered: Services for those who are grieving a homicide, suicide or death due to natural causes; groups are held Mondays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Eligibility: Youth between the ages of 13 and 19

Referral: Drop-in

Dr. Jay Children’s Grief Centre

250 Davisville Ave., suite 405, Toronto, ON
drjaychildrensgriefcentre.ca
416 360-1111

info@griefcentre.org

Services offered: Grief counselling to dying children and to children whose parent or sibling is dying; bereavement program services also include family events, therapeutic groups and Camp Erin, a weekend bereavement camp for children and youth age six to 17; counselling is provided in the home while the family member is palliative, and at their centre once the person has died

Eligibility: Families with children under 21; for children age 4 or younger, support is offered mainly to parents and/or caregivers (all parents and caregivers are eligible for parenting support)

Referral: Referrals are accepted from any source, including self-referrals; download the referral form from their website

Regesh Family and Child Services

149 Willowdale Ave., lower level, Toronto, ON
www.regesh.com
416 495-8832
eschild@regesh.com

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

Eligibility: Children ages four to 12

Referral: Call for an appointment

Fee: Sliding scale based on income

Hospice and Palliative Care

Canadian Virtual Hospice

www.virtualhospice.ca
info@virtualhospice.ca

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Services offered: A Canada-wide website that provides information about palliative care associations, drug/benefit programs, home care programs, residential hospices and other programs and services

The Dorothy Ley Hospice

220 Sherway Dr., Etobicoke, ON

dorothyley.unxvision.com

416 626-0116

Services offered: Bereavement care; one-on-one or group support for caregivers, families and friends anticipating a loss or dealing with the aftermath of a death; referrals to other community services as needed

Hospice Palliative Care Ontario

2 Carlton St., suite 808, Toronto, ON

www.hpco.ca

416 979-9779 ext. 28

Services offered: Information and links to Ontario-based palliative care services and bereavement support groups

The Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care

60 Murray St., 4th floor, Toronto, ON

tlpc.org

416 586-4800 ext. 7884

info@tlpc.org

Services offered: Physical, emotional and spiritual support to adults who are dying at home

Eligibility: People in certain areas of the GTA; see their website for a map outlining their service area

Referral: No referral required for a patient already being seen at the centre; if new to the centre, they need a referral from a doctor or CCAC for palliative care

Resources

For additional resources, see listings on grief and bereavement provided by the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO): www.cheo.on.ca/En/griefbereavement

Understanding Grief

CMHA Ontario. Understanding and coping with loss and grief. Retrieved from ontario.cmha.ca/documents/understanding-and-coping-with-loss-and-grief

CMHA. (2014). Grieving. Retrieved from cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Grieving-NTNL-brochure-2014-web.pdf

Wolfelt, A.D. (2003). *Understanding Your Grief: Ten essential touchstones for finding hope and healing your heart*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press.

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Wolfelt, A.D. (2004). *The Understanding Your Grief Journal: Exploring the ten essential touchstones*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press.

Grieving the Loss of a Child

Fox, S. (2010). *Creating a New Normal . . . After the Death of a Child*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.

Rosof, B.D. (1994). *The Worst Loss: How families heal from the death of a child*. New York, NY: Owl Books.

Wolfelt, A.D. (2002). *Healing a Parent's Grieving Heart: 100 practical ideas after your child dies*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press.

Meditations on Grief

Devine, M. (2017). *It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting grief and loss in a culture that doesn't understand*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

Feinberg, L. (1994). *I'm Grieving as Fast as I Can: How young widows and widowers can cope and heal*. Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press.

Kessler, D. & Kubler-Ross, E. (2014.) *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Kubler-Ross, E. *On Death and Dying*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Rando, T.A. (1988). *How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Samuel, J. (2018). *Grief Works: Stories of life, death and surviving*. Toronto, ON: Doubleday Canada.

Whitmore Hickman, M. (1994). *Healing After Loss: Daily meditations for working through grief*. New York, NY: Avon Books.

For Children

For ages four to 11, see: drjaychildrensgriefcentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Books-for-Children-Ages-4-11.pdf

Buscaglia, L. (1982). *The Fall of Freddy the Leaf: A story of life for all ages*. Thorofare, NJ: SLACK Inc.

Thomas, P. (2012). *I Miss You: A first look at death*. New York, NY: Barron's Educational Series.

For Youth and Young Adults

See reading list at drjaychildrensgriefcentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Books-for-Teens-and-Young-Adults-11.pdf

Fitzgerald, H. (2000). *The Grieving Teen: A guide for teenagers and their friends*. New York, NY: Fireside.

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For Women Who Have Lost their Mothers

Edelman, H. (2014). *Motherless Daughters: The legacy of loss*. Boston, MA: Da Capo Press.

Suicide

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2011). *Hope and Healing After Suicide: A practical guide for people who have lost someone to suicide in Ontario*. Toronto, ON: Author.

This book can be downloaded for free at: www.camh.ca/-/media/files/guides-and-publications/hope-and-healing-en.pdf

Fine, C. (1997). *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving the suicide of a loved one*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.

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