

## Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on grief and bereavement in BC: a province-wide current state analysis

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The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of life and death. For those who have lost a loved one during the pandemic, even how they grieve has been affected. Because of restrictions on social gatherings, traditional supports for grief and bereavement are not accessible, often leaving the bereaved to mourn in isolation. Support groups and volunteer programs have been disrupted along with traditional cultural ceremonies. To better understand the changes in the provision of bereavement services in BC, we conducted a province-wide current state analysis.

The analysis included a literature review to identify practices that have been effective in supporting people grieving during the COVID-19 pandemic or other relevant situations such as previous pandemics or large-scale crises. As well, we conducted a survey, adapted from a research study in the UK, and key informant interviews with organizations that support people through grief and bereavement services in BC, to understand how they have adapted their services. We collected the experiences of people who have become bereaved during COVID-19 through individual interviews, with trained bereavement counsellors.

The current state analysis will inform a provincial roundtable discussion with people with lived experience, service providers, experts, and other relevant key stakeholders. The roundtable aims to identify priority actions and effective strategies to adequately address the unmet needs of those bereaved during the pandemic, and to improve awareness of and access to existing best practices. The action plan and strategies will also apply to future situations that may impact grieving.