

# The Impact of COVID-19 on Bereavement in BC: A Province-Wide Current State Analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of life and death. Yet, the impact on bereaved has had limited attention.

In May 2021, the BC Centre for Palliative Care initiated a project that employs quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand the current state of bereavement in British Columbia. Specifically:

- How people in BC have experienced bereavement during the pandemic beginning March 2020

- How and where British Columbians access bereavement support (formal and informal)
- How bereavement support has changed through the pandemic, and what forms of support were effective
- What could be done better

In Fall of 2021, we received funding from Michael Smith Health Research BC to support the translation of the project findings to evidence-informed recommendations through a provincial roundtable.

## Selected findings from our survey with the bereaved (n=182)

**53%** reported multiple deaths of someone that was important to them since the pandemic

*“Multiple losses - The whole family, community are dealing with “stacked” grief - we barely have a chance to process one loss when there’s news of another - this is accelerating.”*

*(Bereaved Individual)*

**87%** stated their bereavement support was affected by pandemic

### TOP 3 INFORMAL SUPPORTS USED



FAMILY

86.2%



FRIENDS

84.5%



PETS

43.6%

### TOP 3 FORMAL SUPPORTS USED



Individual counselling or therapy

42.5%



Physician Visit

16.2%



Group peer support (through an organization)

13.8%

# Project Roadmap

## Literature Review – May 2021

- To identify practices that have been effective in supporting bereaved people during the COVID-19 pandemic or large-scale crises

## Bereavement Support Provider Survey & Interviews - July 2021

- With bereavement organizations services in BC
- 43 participants
- 16 participants from the survey

## Bereaved Survey & Interviews – November 2021

- With bereaved individuals in BC who experienced a death of someone that was important to them during the pandemic
- Survey: 182 Participants  
Interviews: 20 Participants

## Interviews with bereaved who are unhoused/vulnerably housed – Fall 2022

- With bereaved people in BC that are unhoused/vulnerably housed

## Non-Bereavement Support Providers Symposium – October 11, 2022

## Provincial Roundtable – November 29 & 30, 2022

- The roundtable aims to identify priority actions to address the needs of bereaved people and recommend strategies to improve bereavement support services in BC

## BREB Approval from UBC – July 2021

Michael Smith Health Research BC  
Funding Awarded  
Sept. 2021



Michael Smith  
Health Research BC

## Frontline Workers Perspectives: Bereavement in the unhoused/vulnerably housed - August 2022

- With frontline workers who support people that are unhoused/vulnerably housed

## Bereavement Support Providers Symposium – October 3, 2022

## Bereaved Citizens Symposium – October 13, 2022

- The symposiums aim to validate the project's findings and identify any additional gaps and challenges

