



BY Pallium Canada

Bereavement ECHO Series

Impact of COVID-19 on Bereavement in BC

Tuesday, June 27, 2023
11:00am-12:00pm PST, via Zoom

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	RESOURCES
<p>Introduction & Land Acknowledgment</p>	<p>Bereavement ECHO Series – Impact of COVID-19 on Bereavement in BC Presenter: Dr. Johua Black PhD Bereavement Initiatives Manager BC Centre for Palliative Care</p> <p>Welcome to all participants, Territorial Land Acknowledgment, and introduction of the presenter, Dr. Joshua Black, and presentation outline.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify how people in BC have experienced bereavement during the pandemic 2. Identify where British Columbians access bereavement support 3. Identify how bereavement support has changed through the pandemic 	
<p>Overview Summary Presentation & Discussion</p>	<p>Presentation Summary</p> <p>Introduction to the Centre and the session Presenter, Dr. Joshua Black. Participants are notified the session is being recorded.</p> <p>Many restrictions and changes impacted how people grieved and dealt with a death during this time. The BC Centre for Palliative Care initiated projects and research in order to guide the province-wide round table discussions.</p> <p>BCCPC has conducted ten different research projects to date: throughout this ECHO session we are focusing on four of these projects. In the next ECHO session scheduled for July 25th, we will report more on the provincial round table that took place.</p> <p>During the Pandemic</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was a change in ability to be with the dying (limited or no contact) 2. Change in the ability for death rituals (restrictions to funerals and gatherings, postponed or held virtually with tech challenges) 	

3. Change in the ability to cope and process grief (social support, community, family and friends, physical touch, and hugs, etc.)
4. Change in the complexity of grief.

There was an increase in toxicity or coping mechanisms and multiple losses.

87% of people surveyed found bereavement support was affected by the pandemic: a lot of the support became virtual and limited and it felt insufficient. If in-person support didn't switch to virtual it was often just cancelled. There were some benefits to virtual support such as accessing resources and contacts at greater distances.

Additional challenges highlighted by the presenter:

1. Lack of grief and bereavement literacy
2. Lack of access to desired services
3. Waitlists and timing of care
4. Financial barriers

The bereaved felt they needed and desired more compassion and support from physicians and friends, especially from those who minimized the loss, and workplaces didn't sufficiently acknowledge the emotional difficulties affecting their work. Participants in the study shared that talking about their feelings, normalizing their feelings, and talking with those with same lived experiences helped them, and receiving consistent support. The highest desire mentioned was for access to friends and family (due to restrictions and lack of grief literacy) and group support and to be able to attend grief workshops and talks.

Breakout Rooms - participants divided into seven rooms to discussion the following question:

Q. "What could be done better? From your perspective, how can your community and workplace better support bereaved people who are grieving?"

In the responses from the breakout rooms, participants shared they discussed the importance of having open conversations, and providing support settings from a casual nature, such as a 'death café', to a more structured style of conversation with a facilitator for up to 6 or 8 weeks. The challenges highlighted were the difficulties and overwhelm on the hospice groups providing these more formal groups. Another challenge is staff-burnout during and after COVID and how to have more funding support for services and more recognition of what staff may need to function. Financial challenges were also mentioned, such as three days off work to grieve is insufficient in the workplace and the financial costs of funerals and services.

Several people mentioned that more training is needed about grief and grief literacy, and in a variety of locations across the province. Change is required on a micro and macro level, and more support in areas such as public health

	<p>and public services. We as humans require more support around how our communities are built and how our lifestyles are impacted.</p> <p>The group consensus was strong around the need for better implementation and training around cultural perspectives, and the ability to target and support individuals who don't speak English, and who might not know who to reach out to (support groups and carers who might be more aligned with their cultural values, beliefs, and language, etc.). An increase in knowledge and sensitivity to other cultures is continually needed, as well as recognizing individual needs, and learning how other cultures grieve and process and interact with community and friends and support networks.</p> <p>One participant mentioned that often there are support networks without waitlists, but people don't always know where to start, and it's better for people to have knowledge ahead of time instead of trying to think about looking for resources and support networks while going through an emotionally and mentally challenging time.</p>	
<p>Session Materials and Additional Resources</p>	<p>Resources shared in the group Chat:</p> <p>https://deathcafe.com/</p> <p>Grief support group for those who have loved ones who died from MAID by Oceanna Hall, Spiritual care with Island health: https://intranet.islandhealth.ca/departments/spiritual-health/Pages/maid-bereavement-support.aspx</p> <p>Joining the Canadian Grief Alliance could be a way to connect with other grief orgs and services to share ideas and resources. https://www.canadiangriefalliance.ca/</p>	<p>Session Recording is uploaded on the BCCPC's YouTube page.</p> <p>The link to the video is here</p>
<p>Closing</p>	<p>Next ECHO Session in this Bereavement Series: July 25, 2023, 11am-12pm, with Dr. Joshua Black</p> <p><u>Topic:</u> How to Best Support Bereaved People in the Post-COVID 19 Era: Provincial Evidence-Informed Recommendations by Stakeholders in BC</p> <p><u>To learn more:</u> Visit the BCCPC ECHO session website page here</p>	<p>Link to post-session Survey</p>