



Grief & Bereavement Literacy Series

Session 26: “AboutGrief: An Action Plan and New National Grief Portal”

Presenter: Marney Thompson, M.A. Director of Bereavement Services, Victoria Hospice Society

January 28th, 2026: 12:00pm-1pm PST

Agenda Item	Discussion
Presentation Key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The presenter presented the new national grief portal developed by the Canadian Grief Alliance with funding from Health Canada.• Explained that AboutGrief.ca is a comprehensive website covering all types of grief, not just bereavement.• Described key features including the Understanding Grief tab, grieving a Death tab, non-Death Loss tab, and how to Support Someone Who's Grieving tab.• Highlighted the Grief Assistant feature - an AI tool that provides personalized responses to grief questions.• Presented the Windmill feature, modeled after the Japanese "wind phone" concept, allowing people to send private messages to those they've lost.• Demonstrated the Canadian grief resources map that helps users find local support services. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AboutGrief.ca provides comprehensive, accessible grief resources for Canadians.• The portal includes innovative features to support different aspects of the grief experience.• Users can search for grief resources by location, type of loss, and type of support needed.
National Grief Survey Results	<p>The presenter shared findings from the Canadian Grief Alliance's national grief survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reported nearly 4,000 responses from across Canada, including all provinces and territories.• Highlighted that 50% of respondents didn't feel their grief was adequately supported.• Noted that over 50% felt their grief wasn't adequately recognized.• Shared that non-death losses were significant but even less understood than death-related grief. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadians want more dialogue about grief and to be asked about their losses.• There's a disconnect between what grieving people need and how others respond.• Support expectations are often not met, and people want more varied forms of support.• One size does not fit all when it comes to grief support. <p>Next Steps Action Plan</p> <p>The presenter outlined the Canadian Grief Alliance's recommendations to Health Canada for improving grief support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presented five key recommendations:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Improve grief literacy through targeted public awareness campaigns.b) Use a public health approach to provide accessible grief supports.c) Enhance support for grief professionals and healthcare providers.d) Grow understanding of grief through data collection and research.e) Establish a Canadian center for grief.• Noted synergies with the BC Center for Palliative Care's Collaborative Action Plan.• Acknowledged the importance of these recommendations for advancing grief support. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Next Steps Action Plan provides a roadmap for improving grief support in Canada.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation requires collaboration across organizations and sectors.• The plan addresses both immediate support needs and long-term systemic changes.
Grief Literacy Terminology and Concepts	<p>Discussion about the term "grief literacy" and alternative terminology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questioned whether "grief literacy" is the best term and invited alternatives.• Suggestions from participants were shared- including "grief sensitivity," "grief informed," "grief accepting," and "grief witnessing".• Defined grief literacy as having "the understanding, language, and confidence to recognize grief, talk about it openly, and respond with care"• Conclusion• The concept of grief literacy is important regardless of terminology.• Multiple alternative terms might better capture the essence of what's needed.• The focus should be on improving understanding and support for grief.
Grief Chats and Educational Resources	<p>Discussion on the webinar series and educational materials developed by the Canadian Grief Alliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Described conducting over 30 Grief Chats with more than 2,500 attendees.• Explained that the webinars covered various topics including pet loss, romantic relationship loss, and healthcare provider support• Shared that common questions focused on grief basics like duration, coping strategies, and responding to unhelpful comments.• Presented infographics created to improve grief literacy and counter misconceptions <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Grief Chat recordings are available on the AboutGrief.ca website.• The webinars revealed a significant need for basic grief education.• Shareable infographics are available for organizations to use in their communications.
Future Directions and International Context	<p>Discussion about next steps for the Canadian Grief Alliance and grief support models in other countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentioned that the Canadian Grief Alliance is seeking further funding to continue its work.• Noted interest in developing more culturally diverse grief resources.• Highlighted grief support models in the UK, Ireland, and Australia as potential examples.• Asked about international models that Canada might emulate. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Canadian Grief Alliance hopes to continue Grief Chats with a focus on underrepresented populations.• Australia's national grief organization provides a model for what Canada might develop.• International examples demonstrate the value of public health approaches to grief.
	<p><u>Action items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canadian Grief Alliance<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Consider alternative terminology to "grief literacy" based on suggestions from participants.○ Explore development of printable materials about AboutGrief.ca for distribution.○ Seek additional funding to continue Grief Chats and other initiatives.○ Develop more culturally diverse grief resources.• Webinar Participants<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Test the Grief Assistant feature on AboutGrief.ca○ Submit any missing grief resources to be added to the Canadian grief resources map.○ Share AboutGrief.ca infographics through their organizations.

Closing, Future Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Video recording❖ <u>Upcoming session:</u> <i>April 30th session: Neurodivergence, grief and bereavement</i> <i>Register</i>❖ Past sessions: https://www.bc-cpc.ca/echo-project-new-home/echo-project-past-series-and-resources/#1694021429157-e9440b18-3da4❖ Action Plan: https://www.bc-cpc.ca/about-us/activities/new-projects/bereavement-study/grief-and-bereavement-support-in-bc-a-collaborative-improvement-action-plan/❖ <i>Other Links:</i> Joshua's podcast link: https://www.griefdreams.ca/
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