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Canada Is Facing a Grief Crisis — A New National Strategy Says It's Time to Act

Canadian Grief Alliance calls for urgent action to fix Canada's broken grief support system and confront a silent public health emergency

(Winnipeg, Manitoba) – Grief is a growing public health issue – yet Canada lags significantly behind other countries that have implemented a proactive, national, coordinated response to grief. A new report released today by the Canadian Grief Alliance (CGA) reveals the inadequate state of grief literacy and support services nationwide, and charts a bold new course for national action.

"Canada is in the midst of a grief crisis. Post Covid-19, the volume and complexity of grief has swamped Canada's fragmented patchwork of grief services, leaving far too many people grieving without the support they need," said Paul Adams, co-chair of the CGA. "For those who need grief support, delays can result in serious mental health issues and impacts for the individual, their family, the healthcare system, communities, and the economy."

The report, *Next Steps Action Plan: A Strategic Approach to Grief Literacy and Grief Support in Canada*, lays out a roadmap to bring grief out of the shadows and ensure people grieving in Canada have the support they need – through public education, frontline training, and a coordinated, culturally responsive system of care. Development of the report was funded through investment by Health Canada.

The CGA's five-point action plan includes the following recommendations:

1. **Improve grief literacy** through targeted public awareness campaigns and community engagement.
2. **Adopt a public health approach** to provide accessible and tailored grief services, particularly for underserved populations, that includes approaches and responses to grief developed by and for Indigenous, Black and racialized communities.
3. **Enhance support for grief professionals and volunteers** through expanded training and education.
4. **Foster a deeper understanding of grief in Canada** through national data collection and dedicated research funding.
5. **Establish a Canadian Centre for Grief** to coordinate national policy, program support, and emergency responses.

Financial contribution:

Canadian Grief Alliance



The recommendations were informed by a nationwide consultation that engaged more than 270 key informants from every province and territory, as well as international experts and included 4,000 responses to a national survey. The recommendations would bring Canada in line with successful approaches in the UK, Ireland and Australia, where national leadership has strengthened communities, reduced long-term costs, and enabled immediate and effective responses to tragic events.

In response to a key consultation finding that the vast majority of Canadians lack grief literacy, the CGA has launched [AboutGrief.ca](https://aboutgrief.ca), a national online grief hub to help people better understand and respond to their own grief and to support others through death and non-death losses.

“The consultations reaffirmed the desperate lack of grief services in Canada,” noted, Adams. “Lack of grief services is particularly acute among Indigenous Peoples, Black, and other racialized people, people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, men, children and youth, for non-death losses and for those in rural or remote areas.”

“This is our moment to build a more compassionate society,” said Adams. “We’re calling on government leaders to act – and to finally respond to grief as the public health priority it is.”

Download the full report and learn more [here](#).

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About the Canadian Grief Alliance:

The Canadian Grief Alliance (CGA) is a group of leading grief specialists and 170 national and regional health organizations that was founded by the Canadian Virtual Hospice (CVH) in May 2020 to #MakeGriefAPriority and raise awareness about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on grief in Canada. For the past 4 years, the CGA has advocated for improved access to grief support, expanded public education, and dedicated research funding. Learn more at canadiangriefalliance.ca.

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