

August 31, 2021

Canadian Grief Alliance calls on Federal Parties to

#MakeGriefaPriority

#TheresStillNoVaccineForGrief

(Winnipeg, Manitoba) - The Canadian Grief Alliance (CGA) is calling on federal political parties to put expanding grief support at the top of their party platforms for Election 2021 and implement a national grief strategy that supports the 4 million Canadians grieving deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic and provides a baseline of accessible grief services for all Canadians.

“Canadians have suffered an unprecedented level of grief over the past eighteen months with COVID-19 deaths, job and business losses, losses due to wildfires, which is all complicated by the impact of public health restrictions on how we grieve,” said Paul Adams, grief advocate and spokesperson for the CGA. “And yet support for the grieving is largely haphazard, uncoordinated, and underfunded.”

National strategies for mental health and dementia have been very successful models that the CGA is calling on government to implement for grief.

There is a tremendous amount of grief and loss in Indigenous communities as a result of the ongoing impacts of colonization and structural violence. In recent months, thousands of unmarked graves have been uncovered at residential schools with many yet to be found which amplifies the grief experienced by Indigenous Peoples and communities. “A key element of reconciliation is the commitment to support the healing for Indigenous Peoples,” said Holly Prince, member of the CGA. “We want to know how the parties intend to provide Indigenous designed and led grief services to support our communities.”

Canada has a patchwork of grief services largely provided by charities and community organizations. They are not considered mental health services and therefore haven’t benefited from recent injections of federal funding during COVID-19. Nor are they supported robustly by territorial and provincial health systems. COVID-19 has shed a glaring light on how critical these services are and how difficult it is for many to access services they need.

“Unsupported grief in these unusually difficult circumstances, may lead to anxiety, depression, suicide ideation, substance use, and can impact family relationships and job performance and retention,” said Adams. “Grief affects the individual and the family, and now with the sheer volume of complex grief, it’s a societal issue and an economic issue that needs swift action and leadership. On behalf of the millions of grieving Canadians, we call on all parties to spell out their plans for supporting those confronting the anguish of deep loss.”

Canadian Grief Alliance



Holly Prince – Project Manager and Co-Investigator of Improving End-of-Life Care in First Nations Communities at Lakehead University

Paul Adams – Writer, Advocate, Academic

About

The Canadian Grief Alliance (CGA) is a not-for-profit organization of grief specialists and more than 150 leading health-related organizations advocating for a national grief strategy. The national grief strategy includes: investment in grief services “on the ground” across Canada; public education; and, research to better respond to pandemic-related and influenced grief. Organizations supporting the CGA include: the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Association of Social Work, the Canadian Psychiatric Association, and the Canadian Association of Spiritual Care. It is convened by the Canadian Virtual Hospice, an internationally recognized charitable organization that serves 2.4 million users annually.

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