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## **Groundbreaking Canadian grief survey results released Canadians aren't getting the support they need**

**(Winnipeg, Manitoba)** – Results from the largest grief survey ever conducted in Canada show that the very thing that many people want most when they are grieving - to be asked about their loss - is not how society is likely to respond. This is one of the key findings from a national survey released today.

The survey was conducted in November and December 2023 by the Canadian Grief Alliance (CGA), the organization leading a first of its kind project funded by Health Canada to support the public and professionals in understanding and responding to grief.

The findings, together with the high response rate of 3,874 respondents from every province and territory, validate what grief specialists have been saying for years - people want to talk about their grief.

"Human connection and feeling supported are critical to grieving. However, the survey showed that 50% of grieving Canadians don't feel adequately supported," said Paul Adams, co-chair of the CGA. "This is unfortunate but not surprising when you consider that an overwhelming majority of respondents - 83% - said that being asked about their loss was helpful."

According to many specialists in the field, people often avoid asking about another's loss.

"What we see frequently is that friends and family will often avoid talking to the person about their loss for fear of saying the wrong thing, or 'reminding' the person of their loss," says Maxxine Rattner, PhD, grief specialist and executive member of the CGA. "While this is typically well intentioned, it may leave the person who is grieving feeling isolated and alone. While everyone's needs are different, gently letting someone who is grieving know you are there to listen if they would like to talk about their loss can help them feel seen and let them know you care."

The findings of this survey drive home the critical importance of bolstering grief services and supporting people to understand and respond to grief across the country.

Survey results point to the need to:

- Enhance understanding of loss, grief, and how to provide support among the public and professionals
- Expand access to a spectrum of grief services for both death- and non-death losses.
- Explore in greater detail the grief experiences and needs of people who are:
  - From racialized and marginalized communities;
  - Non-binary;
  - Under age 40.

# Canadian Grief Alliance

**View the survey findings in the Executive Summary linked [here](#).**

These findings will inform a National Action Plan on Grief which the CGA will present to federal Minister of Health Mark Holland in spring 2025.

## **About the Canadian Grief Alliance**

The Canadian Grief Alliance (CGA), is a group of leading grief specialists and 160 national and regional health organizations that was founded by the Canadian Virtual Hospice (CVH) in May 2020 to raise awareness about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on grief. For the past 4 years, the CGA has actively advocated for improved access to grief support, expanded public education on grief, and dedicated funding for grief research.

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