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Grief Is a National Crisis — And It's Costing Us All **New Data Shows Canada Is Failing Grieving People,** **With Real Impacts on Health, Work, and the Economy**

(Winnipeg, Manitoba) – Grief is more than an individual experience — it's a national one. Grief and loss have untold economic and societal impacts, negatively impacting people's mental and physical health, families, and communities.

"In Canada, we treat grief like an individual experience — but the ripple effects of loss extend far beyond the individual," says Marney Thompson, co-host of *Grief Chats Q&A* and Executive Member of the Canadian Grief Alliance (CGA).

Post-Covid-19, research shows that grieving Canadians are at an elevated risk of unresolved, complex, and/or prolonged grief. A lack of access to supports can result in increased isolation and loneliness, depression, anxiety, substance use issues, and the risk of suicide. Insufficient grief services contribute to downstream implications for health and social care systems, society and the economy— negatively affecting people's engagement with family, social, community, and work life.

In response to a 2023 national survey [that found 50% of Canadians](#) don't feel adequately supported when experiencing grief, CGA launched a free national webinar series called ***Grief Chats Q&A***. The 30 webinars, including 6 French language events, provided people living in Canada with a chance to ask questions, hear from grief specialists and those who were grieving losses, and share their stories.

Of 2,492 total attendees, 96% found the online Q&A format useful – showing a clear need for this kind of programming.

The webinars revealed key questions and knowledge gaps Canadians struggle with such as:

- Is my grief "normal"?
- Am I grieving the right way?
- How long does grief last?

"These questions highlight a serious gap in grief literacy across Canada," adds Thompson. "There isn't a 'right way' to grieve, and the grieving process doesn't follow a predictable or universal path or timeline. The nature and course of grief reflects the unique bond between the grieving person and who or what was lost. But society pushes people to 'move on' or get back to normal— often far too quickly and without support."

Financial contribution:

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Grief Chats also offered several “special topic” webinars, which highlighted underserved areas of grief:

- The webinar with the highest attendance focused on **culture and loss**, demonstrating the interest people have in supporting one another.
- A webinar on **men’s grief** highlighted challenges that men experience in expressing or processing their grief, highlighting the need to consider more options for supporting men.
- Webinars for people working in **professions that put them in direct contact with people who are grieving** (including healthcare providers, first responders) underscored a lack of recognition of their grief and its impacts and insufficient supports that can lead to stress, burnout, and people leaving these professions.
- Attendees of the **pet loss** webinar, which was the third highest source of grief identified in the nation-wide survey, expressed that this area of loss is often particularly difficult because it is unacknowledged by society.

“The insights from Grief Chats make very clear that the grieving experience, for many, is being compounded by lack of societal understanding and support,” says Maxxine Rattner, co-host of *Grief Chats* and Executive Member of the Canadian Grief Alliance. “This underscores the need to improve grief literacy, and that the webinar format is an important option in a continuum of grief supports that are needed across the country. Expanding grief services, can ease pressure on the healthcare system, workplaces, and communities.”

The Marney Thompson and Maxxine Rattner are available for interview on this topic. For more information or interview requests:

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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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