



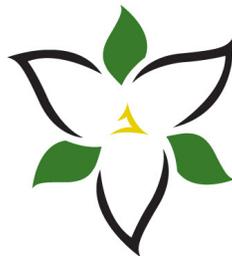
**CENTRE FOR GRIEF & HEALING**  
Bereaved Families of Ontario -  
Halton / Peel

2017-2020 GRANT

# PROGRAM EVALUATION

## PROMISING YOUNG PEOPLE

Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation



Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario

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## INTRODUCTION & ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

1. **BACKGROUND:** In 1977, John McKibbon, part of the chaplaincy department of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, whose own daughter had died of leukemia, initiated a parental bereavement support program endorsed by the hospital's chaplain, Hugh Gemmell. Margaret Darte, Marilyn Lee, Diane Oakes Foster and Irene Clarfield, participants in this program then became involved in the development of a bereavement support program now known as Bereaved Families of Ontario (BFO). In 1989, Bereaved Families of Ontario - Halton / Peel became a Registered Charity committed to supporting grieving individuals and families. We are one of eleven affiliates located throughout Ontario, all with strong community spirit that mirrors the commitment made by volunteers and staff. BFO programs are facilitated by trained volunteers who are themselves bereaved.<sup>1</sup>

a. **PROGRAM MISSION:** To provide inclusive mutual support, improved awareness and education about grief, that fosters hope, healing and improved health and wellness outcomes in the Halton-Peel community.

b. **PROGRAM VISION:** To be the recognized leader in the Halton-Peel Community in support of grief and healing.

2. **CONTEXT:** 3-4% of children will be impacted by the loss of a parent through death, before the age of 18. The loss of one or both parents is associated with increased risks of long term mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Parental death in childhood has also been linked to an increase in suicide later in life.<sup>2</sup>



Post bereavement can also impact school performance and future success. Early intervention for youth is critical in helping them develop coping skills and strategies to strengthen their mental health and wellbeing.

## **GRANT/PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

1. **PROGRAM SUMMARY:** To deliver a project that builds on the success of a proven model or program with a \$236,100 grant over 35 months to assist with staffing and administrative costs to provide grief support for youth and young adults. Supporting the positive development of children and youth, this initiative is helping youth and young adults who are facing barriers develop strong emotional and social skills, impacting the lives of 1,000 people in the community.

a. **PRIORITY OUTCOMES;** More youth and young adults have emotional and social strengths.

b. **METRIC RESULTS:** 1,000 Youth and young adults (14-29 years) who are facing barriers develop strong emotional and social skills .

### 2. **PROGRAM DELIVERY:**

- a. Navigating Through Grief In-School Lunch & Learn Programs
  - i. For Students
  - ii. For Faculty
- b. In-School Wellness Fairs
- c. Art Expression for Grief Healing
- d. Art & Yoga Youth Groups
- e. Interactive tools to increase engagement

### 3. **PROGRAM PARTNERS:**

- a. BFO-H/P Board of Directors & Program Staff
- b. Professional Advisory Committee
- c. Peel District School Board
- d. Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
- e. Halton District School Board
- f. Eclipse Youth Centre
- g. BFO-HP Volunteer Facilitators



## EVALUATION DESIGN

1. **SUMMARY:** In order to measure the efficacy of our youth support programs and bereavement interventions, evaluation is critical to ensuring outcomes are being met and adjusted where needed throughout the life of the project. However, evaluating the effectiveness of our bereavement support programs for youth presented major challenges. While we were able to successfully exceed our number of youth aged 14-29 who received support, education and interventions, quantitative data analysis remained challenging throughout the project.

We were successfully able to measure program achievements and outcomes from adult partners and allies, and continued working with youth wherever possible to formally evaluate outcomes. By shifting paper surveys and feedback forms to digital online formats, we were able to increase the level of data somewhat of youth completing the OTF fund required Forum Research Surveys.

2. **METHODS:** A list of outcomes relevant to our youth support programs were created, following a systematic review of our existing adult programs and evaluation methods, as well as through a quantitative and qualitative literature review of best practices. During a program evaluation workshop, internal stakeholders discussed their views on the challenges of both compiling the data and participant recruitment. We subsequently made adjustments, by creating online surveys that were targeted at youth, as well as creating incentives for participation.

Our program evaluation methods included both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including participant feedback forms; pre-and-post self-report surveys; facilitator feedback internal program audits by staff and online surveys (including OTF's Forum Research administered survey tools).

(Please See Appendix A for examples of our data collection methods, including intake form, group sign-up form, and participant feedback form)



As per the recommendations and guidelines of the Grow Grant Survey Tools, we also looked for data collection methods that:

- scored highly for validity and reliability;
- were closely related to our grant results and outcomes;
- were applicable to a youth and young adult audience, as well as their adult allies and partner stakeholders; and
- were easy to complete and administer.<sup>3</sup>

**PURPOSE OF EVALUATION DESIGN:**

- 1.Track Progress of Workplan
- 2.Monitor Outcomes & Objectives

**LOGIC MODEL FRAMEWORK:**

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE	DATA COLLECTION METHOD
Reach 1,000 Youth	Participant Attendance	Intake Forms Sign-Up Sheets Head Count	Salesforce Database/ Excel Spreadsheet
Increased understanding of grief	Number of program participants responding to knowledge based questions	Youth Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Administered Surveys</li> <li>• Facilitator Administered Surveys</li> </ul>
		Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Administered Surveys</li> <li>• Facilitator Administered Surveys</li> </ul>
Increased feelings of wellbeing	Number of program participants responding to quantitative surveys	Youth Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Administered Surveys</li> <li>• Facilitator Administered Surveys</li> </ul>
Increased coping skills		Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Administered Surveys</li> <li>• Facilitator Administered Surveys</li> </ul>



OUTCOME	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE	DATA COLLECTION METHOD
<p>Increase community awareness about grief issues and available services</p>	<p>Number of Community Partnerships Made</p>	<p>Community Organizations</p>	<p>Salesforce Database/ Excel Spreadsheet</p>
<p>Improve services and support for youth and their families who are grieving</p>	<p>Number of groups conducted</p>	<p>Youth Participants/ Parents/ Teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Administered Surveys</li> <li>• Facilitator Administered Surveys</li> </ul>
<p>Improve data on the needs of grieving youth and their families</p>	<p>Number of surveys completed</p>	<p>Youth Participants/ Teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Administered Surveys</li> <li>• Facilitator Administered Surveys</li> </ul>
<p>Develop systems to support referral from educators and community partners</p>	<p>Number of Referrals made</p>	<p>Community Organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database</li> <li>• Excel Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>
<p>Develop educational resources to provide regular education and information for and to educators</p>	<p>Number of Navigating Through Grief Workshops Held</p>	<p>Teachers/ Community Organizations Serving Youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource List</li> <li>• Educational Library &amp; Database</li> </ul>



# PROGRAM ANALYSIS & RESULTS

## 1. SUMMARY:

### o OUTCOMES REACHED

- 3,759 youth were supported during the duration of the Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant, surpassing our initial goal by 375.9%
- We engaged 12 secondary schools (for a total of 30 visits)
- We engaged 3 post-secondary schools (for a total of 5 visits)
- We engaged 6 community organizations (for a total of 10 visits)

	2017	2018	2019	2020*
1:1 Support	97	62	61	32
Group & Community Support	826	1325	1202	118
Yearly Totals	959	1387	1263	150
Program Totals	3,759			

\*Readers Note: COVID-19 Restrictions prohibited us from conducting in-person Navigating Through Grief & Wellness Workshops for schools and community agencies. While we did continue to offer virtual one-to-one support sessions through Zoom, and participated in community education, our numbers were drastically impacted over the last 90 days of the project.



## **SURVEY RESULTS:**

- 90% of youth surveyed indicated increased feelings of well being, after attending a group support session.
- 90% of adults supporting youth surveyed felt better prepared to support students who are grieving, after attending a Navigating Through Grief Workshop.

## **2. PROGRAM RESULTS**

### **PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

- We developed and implemented a comprehensive, youth specific program for youth aged 14-18
- We developed and implemented a comprehensive, youth specific program for youth aged 19-29
- We implemented both an open-group support program for youth, along with an 8-week closed module
- We increased our one-to-one support sessions for youth
- We created a comprehensive Navigating Through Grief Workshop targeted to both youth and professionals supporting youth in their grief
- We developed and strengthened relationships with school boards, colleges, universities and community agencies to support grief needs and access to information in Halton-Peel

### **PROGRAM IMPACT**

- Youth learned new coping strategies to deal with their grief in a healthy way
- Youth were able to connect with peers who had experienced similar losses
- Youth felt they were better supported in their grief
- Youth felt more optimistic about their grief and future mental well being
- Youth reported a reduction in suicidal thoughts
- Youth reported a reduction in substance abuse
- Youth reported a reduction in self harm
- Youth reported a reduction in feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression



- Professionals felt better able to support youth that are experiencing grief
- Outreach efforts to broaden community-based knowledge about resources, programs and services were successful in raising our organizational profile as a leader in community grief supports
- We helped reduce the stigma associated with grief in our community, while creating opportunities for community discussions

### 3. EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

- While feedback forms were administered after every group, the majority of youth were hesitant to complete. Many youth accessing group services were already in emotional distress, and did not want to stay to complete a survey.
- The open group support format created barriers to pre/post surveys as youth were not committed to a certain amount of weeks, which created baseline comparison difficulties.
- Future considerations include eliminating closed groups, as youth do not like committing to a weekly program.
- Future considerations include increasing one-to-one support for youth, as this age group (14-29) are more reluctant to share in a group setting
- We will continue to improve our existing educational programs and outreach, while tailoring programs for professionals to support and enhance their existing knowledge base.
- We will look to design more digital and online ways to interact with youth in an anonymous way, in an effort to increase survey response and participant recruitment.
- As a result of targeted outreach efforts, we saw a 130% increase in referrals in 2019 and will continue to track and monitor as we grow and expand our existing youth programs.



## **DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS**

### **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

All program results and findings will be shared with internal and external stakeholders and partners.

The audience includes, but is not limited to, program staff, board members, community members, schools, community organizations, funders and potential new partners.

We will disseminate the program outcomes during in-person/virtual board meetings, through e-newsletters, our website and social media platforms. As in previous years, all program results will be shared during our Annual General Meeting and in our Annual Report.

Additionally, we will present our findings across our Bereaved Families of Ontario affiliate network, sharing the outcomes, challenges and best practices to help organizations engage with youth and adult allies to further strengthen our youth programs and services.



## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Bereavement during childhood adolescence and young adulthood has a profound and lifelong impact on physical health, mental health, educational performance, behaviour and relationships. Early intervention is imperative to helping youth reach their full potential and develop resiliency and emotional coping skills that proceed them into adulthood.

Our youth grief support programs successfully surpassed our initial goal by 375.9%, reaching 3,759 youth, while additionally supporting adult allies with education, resources and tools to support bereaved youth.

We were able to successfully reduce feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression and improve coping skills and quality of mental health for our participants. Youth are now better able to face life's challenges and have a strong foundation for coping with future trauma and stressors.

Future programming recommendations include engaging youth where they already are, making it as convenient and accessible as possible. Interacting in schools, community centres, agencies, and existing youth groups/programs will yield even better participation rates and increase engagement.

Future program goals also include increasing our volunteer diversity and offering language and extending our support to newcomers between the ages of 14-29, as well as their families, coping with cultural grief differences. Educational outreach will also cover these topics, ensuring community awareness and sensitivity around diversity and inclusion.

We will also increase one-to-support for youth, as youth are more comfortable sharing in a private environment without fear of embarrassment or judgement.



As data collection and analysis remained a weakness throughout the project, we will continue to work on creating innovative digital strategies to better provide youth with ways to engage in an environment they are more comfortable with. Using tools such as social media polls, Instagram and Facebook live, as well text messaging applications will help to support and strengthen our interaction and data collection.

Partnerships were critical program drivers that ensured the success of our program. Continuing to develop and grow our relationships with community partners and agencies will be pivotal to the future success and growth of our youth programs.



**APPENDIX A**



**CENTRE FOR GRIEF & HEALING**  
Bereaved Families of Ontario -  
Halton / Peel

## Service Participant Intake Form

Intake Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Information**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last DD/MM/YYYY

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Province:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Number to Reach:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How Did You Hear About Us?:**

**Deceased Information**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last

**Relationship to Caller:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **DOD:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (Age: \_\_\_\_)  
DD MM YYYY

**Cause of Death/Circumstances:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Loss (Circle):** Parent / Child / Partner / Suicide / Perinatal / Infant / Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Losses: Deceased Information**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last

**Relationship to Caller:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **DOD:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (Age: \_\_\_\_)  
DD MM YYYY

**Cause of Death/Circumstances:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Loss (Circle):** Parent / Child / Partner / Suicide / Perinatal / Infant / Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appointment Information for One-to-One**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Bringing Support Person:** Yes / No  
DD/MM/YYYY

**If Yes, Name of Support Person:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If Referred to Community Resource:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Community Resource)

**Input to Salesforce:** Yes / No **Input to Salesforce Calendar:** Yes / No

**Additional Notes**

610-33 City Centre Drive, Mississauga, ON L5B 2N5 | Phone: 905-848-4337 | Fax: 905-848-4338  
[www.bereavedfamilies.ca](http://www.bereavedfamilies.ca) | [info@bereavedfamilies.ca](mailto:info@bereavedfamilies.ca) | Charitable Registration #: 11880 3667 RR0001



# APPENDIX A



**Youth Support Group Registration**  
 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday: 4:00pm-5:00pm

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_

#	Location <small>(Miss, Bram, etc.)</small>	First and Last Name	Phone Number	Additional Notes	First Group? <small>(Y, N)</small>
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					



## APPENDIX A



**CENTRE FOR GRIEF & HEALING**  
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### Grief Support Group Participant Feedback Form

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Name (please circle): 1) Mixed Loss 2) Child Loss 3) Guardian Loss 4) Youth Group

Facilitators: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

	Please answer the following questions on a scale from (1 to 10- 1= low/negative 10= high/positive) (Yes/ No) (Very Helpful/Somewhat Helpful/ Not Helpful)									
How were you feeling coming into group today?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was today's topic/discussion helpful?	Very Helpful /Somewhat Helpful / Not Helpful									
Did you feel comfortable sharing in group today?	YES					NO				
Was the group dynamic welcoming?	YES					NO				
What coping tools did the group offer you? (Please fill in your response)										
How are you feeling as you leave group today?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

How can we improve?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did we help you tonight?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## REFERENCE LIST

<sup>1</sup> Bereaved Families of Ontario - Halton/Peel (June 1, 2020). Our History.. Available from: <https://www.bereavedfamilies.ca/ourstory>

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Medicine (US) Committee for the Study of Health Consequences of the Stress of Bereavement; Osterweis M, Solomon F, Green M, editors. Bereavement: Reactions, Consequences, and Care. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1984. CHAPTER 5, Bereavement During Childhood and Adolescence. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK217849/>

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Trillium Foundation (June 15, 2020). Grow Grant Survey Tools - Evaluation. Available from: [https://www.otf.ca/sites/default/files/grow\\_grant\\_survey\\_metrics\\_and\\_tools.pdf](https://www.otf.ca/sites/default/files/grow_grant_survey_metrics_and_tools.pdf)