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

REFERRAL PATHWAY:
CONNECTING OTHERS TO OUR GRIEF PEER SUPPORTS



CENTRE FOR GRIEF AND HEALING

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Peer Support Model

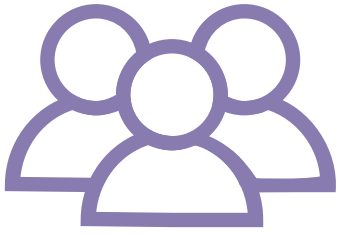
All of our supports are **free** and **peer-based**. We do not offer counselling, therapy, trauma, or crisis support in any capacity. What we offer is peer support, which is the help and understanding provided by someone who has gone through a similar experience. Our approach is rooted in the idea that we are the bereaved helping the bereaved.

Our staff, students, and volunteers are trained grief peer facilitators and workers, coming from various educational backgrounds and lived experiences. While we are not counsellors or therapists, we are people who have experienced a death in our family, friend, or peer circle and are navigating life with that grief. We share experiential knowledge and offer support based on our personal journeys of loss and healing.

Self-disclosure from our helpers is common as we use our own stories to support others. To better understand the differences between peer support and counselling or clinical services, please click here to view our Peer Support Information and Self-Assessment Sheet. This resource can also be shared with clients who may be unsure if our support is the right fit for them.

Let’s Connect Further

We would like to offer you and your team a free, 30-minute "Get to Know Us" virtual meeting, where you can learn more about us, our services, and ask any questions you may have. It’s a great opportunity to better understand how we can work together to support your grieving clients. Please connect with us at programs@bereavedfamilies.ca to schedule a time and/or to share any further questions or concerns regarding our referral process.



OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

Individuals experiencing acute distress following a death may need immediate emotional or crisis support, while those seeking individualized help processing grief may benefit from counselling or therapy. Peer grief support is best suited for those seeking connection, shared understanding, and support navigating life after a death loss.

Peer Supports

- **Peer Support Groups:** We offer various, ongoing virtual (via Zoom) peer support groups for ages 18+ that include partner loss, parent/guardian loss, and a friends and family loss group for those grieving different types of losses. Additionally, we offer closed and time-limited open groups throughout the year, which run for a set number of weeks/sessions based on needs, gaps, and funding support. On occasion, we will offer in-person groups at our main office location in Mississauga near Square One shopping centre.

- **One-to-One Peer Support:** For those preferring a more personal space, we offer one-to-one peer support sessions via phone (or Zoom, based on request and availability of resources). Adults (18+) can book up to 8, 30-minute sessions per year, and youth (ages 6-17) can book up to 12 sessions per year. Please note that we do not offer individual support for children below the age of 6.

- **What We Don't Offer:** We do not provide counselling, therapy, trauma or immediate crisis support; support for anticipatory loss, non-death loss, or pet loss. Our focus is specifically on supporting those grieving the death of a person through a peer support lens.

Educational Resources & Workshops

- **Free Educational Webinars:** Throughout the year, we host diverse, free webinars (titled "GriefTalks") open to the public on topics related to grief, loss, health, and wellness. You can find information on upcoming sessions on our website.

- **Navigating Through Grief Workshop:** We offer fee-based, pre-made virtual workshops for professionals, available in 1.5-hours, half-day, and full-day formats. These workshops cover a wide range of topics related to grief and loss, developed to help you and your team better support those in grief, including yourselves. We welcome any inquiries if you're interested in a workshop for yourself or your colleagues. Please connect with us at outreach@bereavedfamilies.ca if you'd like to learn more about our workshop offerings.

REFERRAL GUIDELINES

Client Consent Requirement

- To ensure a respectful and supportive experience for all clients, it is essential that any referral to our services is made with the explicit knowledge and consent of the client. This approach protects client autonomy and trust, ensuring they are fully aware of the resources available to them.

    - **Informed Decision:** Before making a referral, professionals must discuss our services with the client and obtain their agreement to be referred. This includes providing them with information about what our services entail and how they can benefit from participating.
    - **Empowerment:** Clients should feel empowered to seek support on their own terms. Therefore, it is crucial that they are actively involved in the referral process.

Who Can Refer

We welcome referrals from a variety of professionals who support individuals experiencing the death of a person, including but not limited to:

- Social Workers
- Therapists and Counsellors
- Healthcare Providers (Doctors, Nurses, etc.)
- Community Organization Staff
- Religious Leaders
- Educators
- Funeral Homes and Hospices

All referrals must be made with the understanding that the client's well-being is the priority and that they are aware of and consent to the referral.

REFERRAL GUIDELINES

Common Missteps to Avoid

- **Unauthorized Intakes:** Do not complete any intake forms or provide detailed personal information (such as health records or case notes) about the client without their knowledge or consent. Each client must be actively involved in the referral process, and we must be made aware that the client has provided consent before proceeding with a referral.

- **Assuming Consent:** Always verify that the client is aware of and agrees to the referral before proceeding. This helps **ensure that clients are aware of and prepared for our outreach**, reducing the risk of contacting someone who is unaware of the referral or has not agreed to be contacted. Respecting client consent and involving them in the referral process supports trust, transparency, and a positive first interaction with our organization.

- **Misaligned Referrals:** Avoid referring clients without providing a clear understanding of our services. Ensure that clients are informed about what we offer, such as support and resources, without implying that we provide counselling, therapy, trauma, or crisis support, as these are not services we offer. This clarity helps manage expectations and fosters trust in our organization.

More details about our groups, one-to-ones, how to register, and our intake process can be found on our FAQ webpage here:
www.bereavedfamilies.ca/faq.

REFERRAL PROCESS

1

- **Initial Discussion:**
  - Engage in a conversation with the client about their grief experiences and the potential benefits of joining a peer-specific grief support group or accessing our one-to-one peer-based services. Provide them with an overview of what we offer.

2

- **Obtain Consent:**
  - Clearly ask for the client's consent to share their information or to refer them to our services. If they agree, ensure they understand the next steps in the process.

3

- **Provide Information:**
  - Share relevant brochures or informational materials about our organization and services with the client. Encourage them to review the materials to better understand what to expect.

4

- **Client Initiation:**
  - Encourage the client to contact our organization directly to initiate the intake process. They can fill out our online intake form on our website for the quickest processing. Alternatively, they can call our phone number (905-848-4337) or email us (info@bereavedfamilies.ca), and we can complete an intake over the phone with them. Provide them with our contact information, including our phone number, email address, and website links.
  - If the client prefers, you may offer to assist them in completing an online intake form, but they should be the ones to submit it directly.
  - **Collaborative Referrals:** If you would prefer our team to connect with the client directly before they initiate the intake process, please ensure they are aware of and have consented to this contact. Whenever possible, involve the client in the introduction by arranging a phone call with our team or copying them on an email introducing our services. This helps ensure the client understands why we are reaching out, has an opportunity to ask questions, and feels included in the process.

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REFERRAL PROCESS

5

- **Follow-Up Communication:**
  - After the client has contacted us, our team will follow up with them to confirm receipt of their inquiry and discuss the next steps in the intake process (which includes a completed consent form and participating in a short over-the-phone session*).
  - After receiving an online intake submission, a member of the organization will contact the client within **10 business days** (with exception of statutory holidays and office closures) to schedule an initial session with a staff member, a volunteer, or a student. Please ensure clients check their Junk and Spam folders as our initial email is often sent there first.
  - *Inform the client that they can expect an initial over-the-phone session where we will further discuss their needs and how we can best support them.

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- **Maintain Confidentiality:**
  - Reinforce to the client that their privacy and confidentiality are paramount. All information shared during the referral and intake process will be handled sensitively and in accordance with our privacy policies.

Thank you for taking the time to review this document and for helping us maintain a respectful, transparent, and client-centred referral process. Ensuring clients are informed, involved, and consenting to referrals helps build trust from the outset and supports a positive first experience with our organization. We appreciate your collaboration and commitment to connecting individuals with appropriate grief support.