



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

SECTION A: CONSENT & RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Limits of Confidentiality

We strive to create and maintain a safe environment at the Centre for Grief and Healing. For your protection, our staff, students, and volunteers must keep group discussions and personal information confidential, with the following exceptions:

- If there is clear, imminent risk of serious harm (includes physical or psychological harm) to oneself or others;
- If there is reasonable suspicion of abuse and/or neglect of a minor under the age of 16;
- If there is reasonable suspicion of abuse and/or neglect of an individual living in long-term care;
- If an individual provides information that indicates a crime has been committed;
- If disclosure is required by law or court order (e.g., a subpoena);
- As necessary, with other members of the Centre for Grief and Healing multidisciplinary team

When participating in virtual groups, you consent to participate in support sessions through the internet using Zoom. Unfortunately, online platforms are not 100% guaranteed to be secure and confidential. To read more about Zoom's security and privacy, visit <https://zoom.us/privacy>.

I understand that I must keep all the information I hear in individual and group support sessions confidential, and I will not record any portion of any session. I understand that breaking confidentiality might affect my ability to continue receiving support at the Centre for Grief and Healing.

Please initial above.

I give the Centre for Grief and Healing permission to share verbal and/or written information between staff, students, volunteers, and applicable professionals to ensure I receive the best possible support.

Please initial above.

SECTION B: SAFETY AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Safety Factors

At the Centre for Grief and Healing, we are committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, and disruptive or violent behaviour. We treat all staff, students, volunteers and members with respect and dignity and ensure everyone has equal opportunities. We will not tolerate or ignore harassment or discrimination. If someone brings a claim of harassment or discrimination to our attention, we will address the situation, which could include removal from the organization.

- We require all members with the Centre for Grief and Healing to not smoke (including e-cigarettes) use alcohol or drugs, or engage in violence or self-harm while participating in both in person and virtual settings or on the Centre for Grief and Healing property. If you are under the influence in these settings with us, we may ask you to leave.



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SECTION B: SAFETY AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Safety Factors

Our individual and group support sessions are not trauma-specific. We do not provide trauma-based support to members through these sessions. However, we are trauma-informed. This means we recognize that many individuals experience trauma throughout their lives, which might arise during sessions. There is a risk of explicit/graphic details being heard and shared in support sessions, resulting in the potential of re-traumatization. We encourage discussions about processing emotions, sharing skills, and coping strategies. However, if intense details are shared, we will support you using a trauma-informed approach to the best of our ability. We kindly ask you to please be mindful of the details being shared around a loss.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to Section B of this Informed Consent Form.

Please initial above.

SECTION C: ATTENDING SUPPORT SESSIONS

Virtual Attendance

We ask that you attend virtual and/or phone support sessions from a stable internet connection free from distractions (preferably at the address provided in your intake). This is for emergency, safety, and confidentiality purposes, as well as to avoid any disruptions to the sessions.

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to attend my support sessions from a stable internet connection free from distractions.

Please initial above.

I understand that if I do not attend a session from a stable internet connection free from distractions, the Centre for Grief and Healing may reschedule my support session or remove me from the online support group.

Please initial above.

General Attendance

Your attendance in individual and group support sessions is highly valuable. We understand that occasionally an emergency or life event may occur that will prevent you from attending a session. If you cannot participate in a session, please contact the organization (if possible) before your session to inform us of your absence (see section E for Contacting Us).

I have read, understand, and agree to inform the Centre for Grief and Healing of my perceived absence (if possible) as early as possible.

Please initial above.



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SECTION D: UNDERSTANDING PEER SUPPORT

Understanding Peer Support Terms

- What's a '**Peer**'?: A peer is someone who shares similarities with another person or a group. For example, having experienced a loss.
- What's '**Support**'?: Support is when a person assists, encourages, and comforts another person or group. Some examples of grief support may include: active listening, acknowledging, validating and normalizing experiences, and exploring resources.
- What's '**Peer Support**'?: The Centre's peer support is a process where a person with a shared background/experience uses their knowledge to support another person or group.

Our peer support provides hope, acceptance, empathy, and freedom to express ideas. Peer supporters provide information and share strategies to help you through your grief experience, and they give some guidance by self-disclosing their own experiences.

Scope of Peer Support

The peer support we provide at the Centre for Grief and Healing is not counselling, therapy, trauma, or crisis support. Our peer supporters lead peer support by sharing similar experiences with members and they each have their own unique professional and personal backgrounds.

I understand that should my needs be outside the peer support scope and instead require counseling, therapy, trauma, or crisis support, that I or the Peer Supporter may conclude the support sessions to seek support elsewhere or, may re-direct the conversation back to peer support.

Please initial above.

Benefits of Peer Support

Peer support can provide you with:

- A safe, confidential and non-judgmental space to share freely
- Supportive listening
- Empathy
- Encouragement and hope
- Resources and brief education on grief and loss
- Self-disclosure from peers with lived experience
- A sense of belonging and connection
- Ways to remain connected with your loved one(s)
- Ways to cope with difficult days such as holidays or special occasions
- Identifying emotions
- Coping strategies for triggers
- Ways to practice self-care, self-compassion, and self-soothing

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SECTION D: UNDERSTANDING PEER SUPPORT

Limitations of Peer Support

The Centre for Grief and Healing is **not** able to provide the following support:

- Diagnosis
- Assessments
- Clinical treatment
- Therapeutic techniques or intervention
- Professional counseling or therapy
- Processing trauma
- Advice giving
- Treating existing mental health challenges
- Crisis support
- Being an expert helper
- Severe difficulties in grief (e.g., depression, suicidal ideation, challenges with eating/sleeping, etc.)

The potential risks of participating in peer support sessions may include:

- Feeling overwhelmed or triggered by others' experiences
- Experiencing uncomfortable or painful emotions during discussions
- Feeling uncomfortable sharing personal experiences or feelings with others

Peer Support Consideration

For peer support to be effective, you must be willing to and make an informed choice to engage in the process. A common fear people have when considering peer support is that hearing other people's experiences will be too much for them and might worsen their grief for them. This is a valid fear, and for this reason, some people find clinical help more useful. Peer support is not always successful, and there may be times when you need a level of care we cannot provide, in which case, a Centre for Grief and Healing staff member will discuss the next steps with you.

I have read, acknowledged, and understand what Peer Support is, the support limitations, and what the Centre for Grief and Healing can provide to me through individual and/or group support sessions.

[Redacted]

First and Last Name

[Redacted]

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

SECTION E: APPOINTMENT POLICY FOR SUPPORT SESSIONS

Cancelled Appointments

All cancellations for individual support sessions, including group information sessions, require a 48-hour notice made by phone or email (see section E for Contacting Us). We have a "**3-limit**" policy for late cancellations. The Centre for Grief and Healing considers a cancellation late if we receive it less than 48 hours from the start of your session. If we receive three or more late cancellations from you, we will place you on our waitlist. We understand that life happens and will make exceptions depending on the situation, but this is not guaranteed. This policy does not apply if your Peer Supporter cancels a session.



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SECTION E: APPOINTMENT POLICY FOR SUPPORT SESSIONS

Missed Appointments

All missed appointments (no show, no cancellation provided, forgetting the session) will follow the "3-limit" policy we have in place (see also 'CANCELLED APPOINTMENTS').

Late Appointments

If you arrive late to your appointment, the session will last until the initially scheduled session ends (e.g., if your 2:00 pm session is 30 minutes long and you arrive at 2:10 pm, the session will still end at 2:30 pm). If we do not hear from you by 10 minutes after your session start time, we will contact you to reschedule your session or place you on our waitlist if it is your 3rd or more canceled session. All late appointments that result in rescheduling will follow the "3-limit" policy. If you are late for multiple appointments, a Centre for Grief and Healing staff member will talk with you about next steps.

Late or Absent Replies

After your first and second cancelled and/or late missed individual support and/or group information session, we will contact you via email to reschedule your session (we will only reach out to you by phone if you do not have an email). If we do not hear from you within 14 days of emailing/calling you to reschedule, we will, unfortunately, consider your sessions inactive until we receive a response. If you reply to us after 14 days, we will either place you on our waitlist or provide you with the next session dates if they are available.

If we do not hear from you at the beginning of your session, we may call and leave a voicemail or email you informing you we have tried to contact you. If we do not hear back from you 10 minutes after your session starts, we will email or phone you to reschedule or place you on the waitlist should it be the 3rd missed/late appointment.

Contacting Us

If you need to cancel/reschedule a session or are running late, the best way to get a hold of us is to email your Peer Supporter. You will have your Peer Supporter's contact information if you have already had your first session. If you are new to us and have yet to have your first session, you can email info@bereavedfamilies.ca.

I have read, acknowledge, and agree to the Centre for Grief and Healing's Appointment Policy (Section E) for support sessions.



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SECTION F: COURT POLICY AND LETTER REQUESTS

We do not take notes or keep records of our conversations with you in individual or group support sessions here at the Centre for Grief and Healing. This is because we do not provide clinical support. If requested to write a letter on a court-related matter, we will outline how many sessions you have attended and the type of session. We will not provide information detailing what we talked about in sessions or the themes of the sessions.

If a Peer Supporter is requested to write a letter on a court-related matter, they will **not** be stating their opinion. We will never make recommendations regarding custody or any other court-related case.

If you request a letter, we require a minimum of 7 business days of notice. The Centre for Grief and Healing cannot guarantee a letter; we will give you a reason if we cannot provide one. If you request a letter and your Peer Supporter is away and unable to write one, you must respect the time it takes them to complete it.

I have read, acknowledged, and understand what will happen should a court-related matter occur or a letter be requested.

Please initial above.

SECTION G: SESSION INFORMATION

Individual Support Sessions

We offer two kinds of individual support sessions depending on your age. For those who are 18+, we offer 8 individual support sessions. For those ages 6-17, we offer up to 12 individual support sessions. All individual support sessions are 30 minutes long, and we schedule them between Monday-Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Group Support Sessions

All individuals wishing to join group support sessions must first have an **Individual Group Information session**. This session will provide information and help you prepare to register for our groups. This session lasts up to 30 minutes, and no sequential individual support sessions are provided. This is not a support-based session.

We run 2 different types of groups throughout the year at the Centre for Grief and Healing. Group sessions can last up to 90 minutes in length (this may be adjusted based on the type of group, attendance, and level of participation).

- **Open Groups:** Are ongoing and can occur monthly, weekly, or bi-weekly throughout the year. New members can join at any time. These can be accessed on an unlimited basis.
- **Closed Groups:** Are specific to a population, type of loss, or specific community need. These run at certain times of the year and are fixed to run for a certain number of weeks/sessions. Members begin and end the group at the same time, and no new members join after the first 2 weeks. You must be able to attend a minimum of 75% of the group sessions.



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I, [REDACTED] agree to this Informed Consent Form's terms and conditions for services and supports. I acknowledge that I have read and understood these terms.

[REDACTED]
Client Signature

[REDACTED]
Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Staff Signature

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

PLEASE SCROLL TO THE LAST PAGE OF THIS DOCUMENT BELOW TO COMPLETE YOUR SIGNATURE AND PROCEED WITH SCHEDULING YOUR INITIAL APPOINTMENT.





PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

With regards to participation in virtual, phone, and/or in-person programs provided by the Centre for Grief and Healing, I understand, acknowledge, and agree that:

1. Centre for Grief and Healing is a peer support organization for persons bereaved by the death of a loved one. I am aged 16+, bereaved by the death of one or more of my loved ones.
2. I understand that Centre for Grief and Healing is not a counseling or therapy service.
3. I understand that Centre for Grief and Healing is not a crisis or trauma service. If a crisis should arise, I understand that Peer Supporters are mandated to take the appropriate steps to keep myself, group members, and Centre for Grief and Healing staff, students and volunteers safe.
4. I understand that, in the case of an emergency, Centre for Grief and Healing may need to contact my emergency contact person or call 911. I give permission to Centre for Grief and Healing to do so.
5. I understand that my participation in the Centre for Grief and Healing services is voluntary.
6. It is my responsibility to consult with my healthcare provider(s) to determine whether I have any restrictions which would limit my use of the services offered by Centre for Grief and Healing.
7. Centre for Grief and Healing cannot provide me with any medical or other treatment.
8. I will assume responsibility for my physical and emotional health while participating in any of the services offered by Centre for Grief and Healing.
9. Any recreational activity involves some risk of injury, whether apparent or not; by participating in any such activity I assume all risks. I release Centre for Grief and Healing of any liability for injury or damages resulting from my participation in any recreational and/or movement-based activities or events.
10. I agree to update my information to reflect my current location when accessing a service so that, in the event of an emergency, Centre for Grief and Healing is able to send emergency services to my location.
11. I will be respectful of the privacy and rights of other participants and Peer Supporters at the Centre for Grief and Healing.

Client Signature

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Staff Signature

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)