

## **Why Does Grief Stories Exist?**

Grief Stories exists exclusively to promote health by sharing evidence-based information and practical strategies to help people cope with grief, using the vehicle of personal stories and professional insights presented in short video clips, podcasts and blog posts.

We believe that Grief Stories HEALS by helping grievers feel:

**H**opeful for healing,  
**E**mpowered to cope,  
**A**ccepted as normal in their grief,  
**L**ess alone in their experience and  
**S**upported to share their own story.

Grief can be isolating, leaving the bereaved struggling to understand what is happening to them and without ways to cope. When Sean was grieving the death of his wife Suzy, he often found himself awake in the middle of the night, searching the internet for content to help him understand his experience. With supportive friends, as well as individual and group therapy he was working through his grief, yet he still sought additional resources in those lonely hours. He found his attention span was too short for long blog posts and websites full of text. His friend, Rob, a professional filmmaker, founded Grief Stories as a way to offer people like Sean information about grief and how to cope with it that they could access on the internet anytime.

Grief Stories strives to create an accessible, diverse, inclusive, on-demand resource to help grievers and those who support them using innovative technology to help people feel connected through shared stories offering insights about the experience of grief.

## **How does Grief Stories provide a benefit?**

Grief Stories is a unique resource offering information about grief and strategies for coping to benefit individuals and groups, including grievers, friends, family and professionals who support them. Stories can be searched by relationship, type of death, age of the deceased and other such factors, allowing site visitors to find the most relevant information for their situation. The Grief Stories team is working to expand the content to be more inclusive and more accessible to benefit Black, Indigenous and People of Colour and people with different abilities as they grieve, as well as for grievers mourning any type of death.

Grief Stories creates content based on current evidence-based research in the field of bereavement and grief, with a focus on lived experience as well as professional insight. This information is presented in a range of formats and in short, focused styles designed to suit a variety of learning styles.

Grief Stories strives to provide information about and strategies to cope with a wide range of types of death that currently includes the following categories:

- Death and grief during a pandemic

- Opioid death
- Bereavement professionals insights
- Death during service
- Death of a loved one
- Death of a child
- Death of a parent
- Death of a sibling
- Death of a grandparent
- Death of a partner
- Living with dying
- Pregnancy and infant loss
- Suicide
- Supporting others in grief

Grief Stories offers this content through a range of resources including video, audio and written information with insights and practical strategies. All content at Grief Stories is shared specifically to help griever explore and express their own grief and to connect with the stories of others, helping them feel less alone as they learn how others have coped when they experienced similar loss as well as ideas they can implement in their own healing.

Grief Stories began with the creation of short, focused videos with individual participants sharing information and insights about grief from a professional or lived experience perspective. The video library continues to expand as Grief Stories films more volunteer participants, with content created and curated by healthcare professionals to ensure the inclusion of insights and ideas about how to cope with different types of grief.

- According to research compiled by 3M, the corporation behind Post-it Notes, visuals are processed 60,000 times faster than text. [Fast Company](#)
- According to Dr. James McQuivey of Forrester Research, one minute of video is worth 1.8 million words to a consumer when it comes to swaying an audience. If you were to write 1.8 million words on a blog post, it would take approximately 3600 pages. A simple video does the work in a fraction of the time.
- By 2021, 80% of the world's internet traffic will be video. ([Jarboe, G., 2017](#)) In 2019, Canada had an estimated 34.56 million internet users. That year it was calculated that online services reached almost 96 percent of the population. ([Statista, 2020](#))
- Audiences are about 10 times more likely to engage, embed, share, and comment on video content than blogs or related social posts ([Content Marketing Institute, 2013](#))
- Search engines like Google are placing more emphasis on video and presenting them higher (and more frequently) in their search results. ([Brainshark, 2013](#))

More recent additions to the available resources include the Grief Stories Podcast and the Grief Stories Blog. The podcast format is designed to share real stories, with a focus

on what has helped each guest find hope and healing after loss. The blog posts are written by professionals and guests with lived experience, focused on the topics related to coping with grief. Grief Stories is working with a team of music therapists to develop guided instructions for using music to explore and express grief, with a plan to launch the music resource page in November 2020.

Offering anyone who can connect to the internet the opportunity to access visual and audio stories that are relevant to them by factors such as type of death and relationship to the deceased is a powerful tool for learning strategies to cope with grief. Grief Stories' content helps normalize the experience of grief from a broad range of causes of death, offering practical strategies and encouraging grievers and their supporters to learn about strategies for coping with grief.

Participants are invited to share their story through video or as a podcast guest through networking, professional referrals, social media campaigns as well as an invitation to participate posted on the Grief Stories website. Grief Stories' filmmakers use strategies to film participants designed to increase the feeling of intimate connection with the speaker, making the video feel even more personal and emotionally impactful. Participants are supported by the filmmaker and the Grief Stories team to share their story in a way that feels comfortable and authentic for them, with a focus on insights about hope and healing after loss. Participants give informed consent and have full control over the filming, and can stop or return to repeat any part of the process to alleviate any pressure to perform. Anecdotal evidence suggests the process of filming is cathartic for participants, as they are guided to share specific strategies and concepts that have helped them cope with grief.

After the films have been edited and vetted they are shared with the participant. For the videos to be posted to the website, participants must sign a release that includes their right to stop the use of the videos at any time.

Similarly, the Grief Stories podcast features interviews with real people about their stories of loss, the challenges they face in grief and what has helped them find hope and healing. Each podcast features a guest interviewed by host Maureen Pollard, a registered social worker with a Master's degree, who specializes in grief and bereavement as a significant portion of her private practice. Following a pre-recording interview to explore the guest's story and offer information and support about the podcast process, each guest is invited to share their story of loss, to talk about some of the real challenges they have faced in grieving, and some of the strategies they have found for hope and healing.

Regular, insightful blog posts about the experience of grief and supporting bereaved people after a loss are written by Maureen Pollard or Sharron Spencer, both educated and experienced in the field of grief and bereavement work. Guest posts are invited from professionals and people with lived grief experience and included once edited as necessary and approved by Maureen and Sharron.

Video, audio and short written content offers site visitors with a range of learning styles the ability to select the format of information that best suits them. The length of the films, podcasts and blog posts are intentionally short, sharing a specific insight or tip related to grief in a way that matches the sometimes fractured attention span of a griever. The playlist format is being further developed to allow site visitors the opportunity to move through several videos by the same person or on the same topic if they have a longer attention span and desire more information.

All information available on the site is based on the knowledge, experience and wisdom of professionals or on the lived experience of bereaved individuals. Rob Quartly, Sean Danby, Maureen Pollard and Sharron Spencer vet the content for quality and to ensure that the information is aligned with current theories of grief support.

### **Who will benefit from Grief Stories?**

In 2018, there were 283, 706 deaths reported in Canada. ([Government of Canada, 2020](#)) If each death leaves, on average, 4 - 5 grieving survivors, this means there are close to 1.5 million new grievers every year in Canada alone.

In 2019, there were about 1.9 million widowed individuals in Canada. This figure has been increasing steadily since 2000, when there were about 1.55 million widowed people living in Canada. ([Duff, E. 2020](#))

Approximately 11 people die by suicide in Canada every day. ([Government of Canada, 2020](#))

Everyone will experience grief at some time in life. Most people will experience multiple losses over time. Many people feel unprepared to cope when they face the death of a loved one. Grief Stories could potentially be a useful resource to everyone when they are bereaved or supporting someone who is grieving.