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Spring Edition

National Palliative Care Week - May 3-9

Our *10 Myths About Palliative Care* infographic is now available in 13 languages—helping dispel common myths and spread understanding of palliative care everywhere.

[Share with your community](#)

Highlights and Recognition

Recognizing Nurses and Paramedic Services this May

May 11–17 is National Nurses Week in Canada. We extend our gratitude to all nurses, including those in hospice and palliative care and those who support the work of Canadian Virtual Hospice. Explore free learning modules for healthcare providers on the Learning Hub.

[Explore the Learning Hub](#)

May 17–23 is Paramedic Services Week in Canada. We recognize the 30+ paramedics who helped develop *MyGriefToolbox.ca*, a free learning tool supporting paramedics responding to palliative care calls and strengthening quality care.

[Explore MyGriefToolbox](#)

Sending our love and support to mothers, fathers, parental figures, and children in grief this spring

Mother's Day and Father's Day can be difficult for many reasons. Whether you are grieving the death of a child, missing your mother or father, longing to be a parent, or navigating a strained relationship, these days can bring up complex emotions. We want you to know we are thinking of you and holding you in our hearts. In anticipation of Mother's Day in May and Father's Day in June, we invite you to explore this KidsGrief.ca resource, developed with children's grief specialist Dr. Ceilidh Eaton Russell, to support children experiencing grief during these times.



KidsGrief.ca Helping you support grieving children and youth

Mother's Day and Father's Day

Grief is difficult on any day, but some days are harder than others, no matter how long it has been since the person died. Mother's Day or Father's Day can be extra hard when a child or youth is grieving a parent, step-parent, or other important caregiver.

Grief brings some of the biggest feelings, questions, and changes anyone ever faces. The death of someone important can cause a child or youth to feel like life has changed completely.

Grief can affect the mind, body, emotions, behaviour, relationships, identity, beliefs, and how a child sees the world. It can feel overwhelming and out of control.

Grief can change from moment to moment and over time, but many children say that it is always with them.

Plan ahead

These days may be difficult, but they can also be a time to remember, to spend time with family, to share memories and feelings, and to support each other. There is no "wrong" way to spend these days. Planning ahead allows a child to think about and choose an activity they will feel most comfortable with and can help ease some of the stress. Here are some options you might consider together:

Family traditions

If they used to eat pizza and cake with the person, they might still enjoy doing that, and thinking or talking about the person while eating.

Something old and something new

You might try a new location for a favourite activity, for example, eating pizza and cake in a park, instead of at home, where the person's place or at the table is empty.

Create New Traditions

Try something that was special to the person who died, like going to a special place, eating their favourite meal, or listening to music they enjoyed. Or choose a special way to remember, like looking through photos, visiting the cemetery, or calling someone to talk about the person who died.

Different Needs

It's okay if it feels too hard for the child or youth to do something special on Mother's or Father's Day. It doesn't mean they don't care or miss the person who died. They can remember and grieve at other times, perhaps on a day that feels less intense.

What are children Grieving?

They may grieve and miss the person, while everyone else is spending time with their living parents.

Messages about "happy" Mother's or Father's Day may feel isolating.

They may wonder how to spend the day.

They may feel that others see or treat them differently.

What may help?

While these strategies won't lessen grief, they provide practical ways to support grieving children and youth by being present, listening, respecting choices, and assuring them that they are not alone.

Here are some options you might consider:

Familiar traditions

If they used to eat pizza and cake with the person, they might still enjoy doing that, and thinking or talking about the person while eating.

Something old and something new

You might try a new location for a favourite activity, for example, eating pizza and cake in a park, instead of at home, where the person's place or at the table is empty.

Create New Traditions

Try something that was special to the person who died, like going to a special place, eating their favourite meal, or listening to music they enjoyed. Or choose a special way to remember, like looking through photos, visiting the cemetery, or calling someone to talk about the person who died.

Different Needs

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Strategies at School

Every child is unique. If there are Mother's Day or Father's Day activities at school, only they know what feels best for them. Talk with teachers in advance about supporting the child, and what choices they can offer. For example, children choose any (or none) of the following:

- Do the activity and make something for their parent who died.
- Do the activity but make it for another important person in their life.
- Do a different activity that they choose.
- Take a break from the classroom to go to the library or another safe space.

Remember:

Listen, listen, listen to what the child is and isn't comfortable with.

Teachers can help

Talk with teachers in advance about supporting the child. Teachers can help by finding a quiet moment with the child to discuss and plan the following:

- How the child wants to spend their time during the activities in class.
- If they want to share anything with their peers about their parent or their parent's death, and what they want to keep private.
- A grief plan listing things the young person can do (look at pictures, read a book) or places they can go (washroom, library) when big feelings come up.
- A signal (an item placed on their desk) to let the teacher know that they need to take a break or do something else.

Harvey Max Chochinov to receive an honorary doctorate

Dr. Harvey Max Chochinov, FRCPC, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Porto. The distinguished professor of psychiatry was the second Canadian to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Porto for his contributions to the advancement of palliative and dignity-based care.

[Read more](#)

Opportunities and Calls to Participate

Innovation Challenge 2026 Submission Deadline Extended to June 15

Do you have a program, service, resource or research that has made a positive impact in hospice and palliative care? The submission deadline for Canadian Virtual Hospice's 2026 Innovation Challenge has been extended to June 15, 2026. Don't miss your chance to take the stage at the Montreal International Palliative Care Congress in Montreal, competing for the title of International Palliative Care Innovator of 2026 and the \$1,000 CAD cash prize. The Innovation Challenge takes place on October 8, 2026, where six finalists will each have six minutes to convince a live audience and panel of distinguished judges that they deserve to be named the winner.

The application is quick and easy to complete.

Take 15 minutes and [submit your innovation](#) today.

Speaker submissions open for Canadian Children's Grief Symposium

Speaker abstract submissions for the 2026 Canadian Children's Grief Symposium are now open until May 15, 2026.

The Symposium welcomes submissions on a wide range of topics and perspectives to support its diverse audience, with a particular interest in presentations that go beyond introductory content. This includes advanced practice, varied experience levels, and innovative approaches to supporting children, teens, and families who are grieving.

[Learn more](#)

Participate in Research on Aging and End-of-Life Planning

The Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health is seeking participants aged 60+ living in Ontario, Saskatchewan, or Alberta who are managing at least one chronic condition.

Researchers from the University of Regina, Mount Royal University, and Lakehead University invite participants to take part in a study exploring how social and political factors influence end-of-life planning among older Canadians.

[Learn more](#)

Finding Connection After Loss: Camp Widow

Camp Widow is a community-building program offering widowed people opportunities to connect, learn, and find hope. Soaring Spirits Canada embraces a broad definition of

widowhood, welcoming anyone who has lost the person they expected to share their life with. The event returns to Toronto in 2026 and continues to expand access to connection across Canada.

Toronto – May 29–31, 2026

Calgary – September 25–27, 2026

[Learn more](#)

Upcoming Events and Conferences

HPCO Annual Conference

June 14-16, 2026 | Richmond Hill, ON

HPCO2026 is presented by Hospice Palliative Care Ontario. This in-person conference attracts over 800 delegates from across Canada and worldwide, representing all professions, roles, and care settings across the healthcare continuum.

[Register](#)

Glimmers Through Grief

July 20-24, 2026 | Vaughan, ON

Cortellucci Hospice Vaughan, in collaboration with Children's Healing Studio, will once again be offering "Glimmers Through Grief", a free one-week summer camp for children between the ages of 7-12 who have lost a loved one.

[Register](#)

Palliative Care Education and Research Conference

October 19, 2026

The annual Palliative Care Education and Research Conference, hosted by Covenant Health, brings together healthcare providers, researchers, community leaders, and other palliative care experts. This year's theme is "Palliative Care in a Changing World".

[Register](#)

CHPCA Learning Institute

2026 - 2027 | *Virtual*

The Learning Institute is the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association's national professional education program, designed to strengthen workforce capacity in hospice palliative care. Registration opens soon for the May and June sessions of the 2026-2027 virtual Learning Institute.

[Register](#)

Webinar Series

KidsGrief Q&A Spring

May 12, June 9, 2026 | *Virtual*

Join our webinar hosted by children's grief specialists Andrea Warnick, MA, RN, RP, Colleen Mousseau, M.Ed., RP, and Nicola Elbro, MA, RP, as they answer your questions. A recording of the session will be available to all who register for a session, even if they cannot attend. Please submit your questions for discussion in advance via the link below.

[Submit a question](#)

[Register](#)

Watch, Listen & Past Webinars

[KidsGrief Q&A Webinar recording - March, 2026](#)

[KidsGrief Q&A Webinar recording - April, 2026](#)

What Support is Needed to Strengthen Palliative Care in the North? - Dr. Holly Prince CBC Interview

Holly Prince, PhD, researches palliative and end of life care for Indigenous people at Lakehead University in Ontario, and recently helped lead a series of workshops in Yellowknife. She joined The Trailbreaker host Shannon Scott to share what she learned about end of life care in the North.

[Listen in](#)

Learning, Research & Reading

Integrating psychiatry into a community-based palliative care team for structurally vulnerable populations

This study led by Ovin Thomas describes a Toronto-based palliative care program that integrates a novel model of psychiatric support for people experiencing structural vulnerability—such as homelessness, poverty, and barriers to accessing healthcare—who are living with serious illness.

[Read more](#)

Feasibility and Acceptability of a Self-Written, Tele-Delivered, LGBTQ+-Affirming Adaptation of Dignity Therapy for LGBTQ+ Women With Advanced Cancer

Background Dignity therapy (DT) is effective in addressing dignity-related existential distress in people with advanced cancer, but the traditional protocol assumes supportive family structures, uses heteronormative language, and requires synchronous clinician facilitation. These features may limit accessibility for LGBTQ+ individuals. Written by Lexie Wille, PhD, et al., this pilot study evaluated the feasibility and acceptability of a self-written, tele-delivered LGBTQ+-affirming DT adaptation.

[Read more](#)

Twenty Years of Dignity Therapy: Evidence, Challenges, and Implications for Person-Centered Care

Dr. Harvey Max Chochinov, FRCPC, reflects on his two decades of experience with Dignity Therapy, examining feasibility, cost considerations, potential risks, and sources of variability in outcomes.

[Read more](#)

Exploring the factors that prevent or facilitate palliative care at 'home' for adults experiencing structural vulnerability

While most people express a preference to be cared for and die at home, not all people have access to a safe or stable home. Government policies often encourage home death yet those who are precariously housed, homeless, or living in supportive or transitional housing, are often excluded. This scoping review written by Alexandra Stewart, MA, RCC, CCC, University of Victoria, et al., aims to summarize the current literature on the factors that facilitate or prevent palliative care at 'home' for structurally vulnerable adults.

[Read more](#)

Opinion: The power of showing up for an ailing loved one

Written by Dr. Harvey Chochinov, FRCPC, this opinion piece speaks to a growing body of work in palliative care and points to an approach called Intensive Caring, which reframes visiting and caregiving not as a way of fixing, but as a way of being with. Though originally developed for health care professionals, its lessons are especially relevant for families.

[Read more](#)

Top 10 research priorities for adolescent and young adult cancer in Canada

Cancer in adolescents and young adults (AYAs; ages 15–39 years) is a rising global epidemic. Yet, AYAs remain an understudied population, and little is known about what research topics should be prioritised according to those with lived experience. Written by Perri Tutelman, Ph.D, R.Psych, et al., this manuscript presents the top 10 research priorities for AYA cancer in Canada according to patients, caregivers, and clinicians.

[Read more](#)



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