



Nova Scotia Grief Alliance

Terms of Reference

The mission of the Grief Alliance is to establish a network across Nova Scotia to share grief information and resources, cultivate connections, and strengthen collaboration in grief support. The Grief Alliance is designed for those working in, or interested in, grief support, including grief groups, non for profits, community members, among others.

While the Grief Alliance does not offer grief counselling services, it fosters peer connections, shares effective grief approaches, and offers education to strengthen community support.

Welcome

Welcome to the Grief Alliance. This document provides an overview of the purpose and benefits of participating in the Grief Alliance. By accessing or participating in the Grief Alliance, you acknowledge and agree to the Terms of Reference, which are grounded in a trauma-informed approach to foster safety, respect, and inclusivity for all those who participate in Grief Alliance activities.

Purpose

The Grief Alliance aims to build community capacity across Nova Scotia to support grief, bereavement, and wellbeing through education, training, knowledge translation, and networking.

The Grief Alliance is a network of individuals and organizations committed to:

- **Raising awareness:** Grief is a shared human experience. We create safe space for open conversations about loss, offering support and empathy

- **Networking and Sharing:** When we work together and share our collective wisdom, we build a stronger, more resilient community for all
- **Promoting Best Practices:** Fostering a more informed and supportive environment through grief literacy and sharing our successes
- **Building Capacity:** Identify community needs and gaps and strategies to help. By listening to one another and working together, we build a stronger, more resilient community that can adapt to challenges.

Values and Guiding Principles

The work of the Grief Alliance is grounded in the following values and guiding principles, shaped by the collective experiences and voices of our community:

- **Compassionate Communities:** We aim to strengthen the support systems within our communities, ensuring individuals experiencing grief and loss feel cared for and connected.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Our work emphasizes community-driven, cooperative efforts that actively include and honor diverse perspectives, fostering a collective approach to addressing grief.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** We are committed to integrating a lens of equity, diversity, inclusivity, reconciliation, and accessibility (EDIRA). This includes a deep commitment to listening to and learning from cultural communities, ensuring our work supports reconciliation and respects the lived experiences of all.
- **Trauma-Informed Practices:** We approach all our activities with a trauma-informed perspective, acknowledging the impact of trauma on individuals and communities, and ensuring that our practices support healing, resilience, and safety.
- **Cultural Sensitivity and Reconciliation:** We respect and support cultural customs and traditions of grieving by working collaboratively.
- **Future Growth:** As the Alliance evolves, we remain open to refining and redefining these guiding principles, reflecting the changing needs and voices of all communities, particularly those that have been historically marginalized.
- These principles guide our collective work, ensuring that the Grief Alliance serves as a compassionate, inclusive, and supportive space for all.

The Grief Alliance Structure

The Grief Alliance is coordinated and co-led by Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association (NSHPCA) and Nova Scotia Health (NSH). Together, NSHPCA and NSH facilitate local roundtable events, organize the annual provincial symposium, and organize educational opportunities. They also provide regular communications that support grief care and a compassionate understanding of grief in the community.

Local participation is an integral part of the Grief Alliance, both contributing to and benefiting from shared resources, knowledge, and connections that strengthen our collective ability to support those experiencing grief. Built on collaboration, the Grief Alliance strives to facilitate compassionate connections in the community, making it easier for Nova Scotians to talk about and understand their grief, support one another, and access the support they need. It also provides an opportunity to discuss what is working in the community and where gaps may exist.

Participants

The Grief Alliance uses contact information from those who participate in Grief Alliance activities to:

- To communicate about opportunities and events, such as education or symposiums.
- Share resources and updates.

Participants' contact information is not shared with other participants in the Grief Alliance.

All individuals, groups, and organizations that provide grief services or have an interest in grief support are welcome to register as participants of The Grief Alliance. Participation is free, and individuals are encouraged to engage in a way that best suits their needs and preferences. Please note that a small fee may be associated with the annual symposium.

Participation Benefits:

- Connecting with peers across Nova Scotia and locally to share knowledge and experiences, and to identify needs and gaps

- Access to shared community resources and learning materials to support growth and connection
- Opportunities to engage in roundtables, and other activities where community members can share ideas, insights, and experiences.
- Invitation to the Annual Grief Symposium

Conflict of Interest

As a community, we value transparency and integrity. Members are asked to disclose any potential conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity, including financial interests in organizations related to grief support or emotional wellness.

The primary goal of the Grief Alliance is to strengthen connections and collaboration, enhancing grief literacy across Nova Scotia. We encourage all members to prioritize mutual support, shared learning, and community-building, focusing on the collective needs of the community rather than personal or organizational promotion. Together, we work toward a more informed and compassionate community for everyone.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity, Reconciliation, and Accessibility (EDIRA)

We welcome all who engage respectfully and constructively with diverse perspectives, understanding that grief and emotional wellness are experienced in many different cultural contexts. Every individual's contribution is valued, and we are committed to creating an environment where everyone can participate fully, equitably and feel they are part of a safe space.

We actively seek feedback on how to better include diverse voices and perspectives in our work, ensuring that all community members are heard and supported.

Creating a Compassionate Environment

The Grief Alliance is committed to creating a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for all members, volunteers, staff, and partners. Members of the Grief

Alliance are expected to communicate respectfully, uphold inclusivity and confidentiality, demonstrate professionalism and empathy, collaborate in good faith, ensure safety and accountability, and commit to growth by being open to feedback and ideas.

All participants help create a compassionate and supportive environment. Together, we work to build community capacity across Nova Scotia, supporting grief, bereavement, and well-being through education, training, knowledge-sharing, and networking. Every contribution strengthens our collective ability to care for and uplift one another.

Acknowledgment and Consent

By registering for the Grief Alliance activities, you acknowledge and agree to the outlined Terms of Reference.

The Grief Alliance may need to update or modify the Terms of Reference as needed to best support our community. Any changes will be shared with an updated effective date. By continuing to participate, you agree to be bound by the updated terms, helping us maintain a space that reflects the needs and values of our collective work.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these Terms of Reference, please contact us by email at griefalliance@nshpca.ca.