

Nova Scotia Grief Alliance

CENTRAL REGION

ROUNDTABLE

What We Heard Summary

On Thursday, October 2, the Nova Scotia Grief Alliance (NSGA) held its third regional in-person roundtable. Led by Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association (NSHPCA), the NSGA hosts regional roundtables to bring together individuals and organizations involved in grief support. Roundtables provide space for those working in grief support locally to hear about grief initiatives in their area, learn about NSGA, and share insights on grief needs and opportunities.

Central Region Roundtable Summary



Who Attended

24

Community members, from Windsor to Porters Lake, NS.

8

Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association & Nova Scotia Health leaders.

Participants from a range of sectors attended, including:

- Community-based grief support, health care and school based professionals, non-profit organizations, volunteers, researchers, hospice societies.



Key Activities

- Nova Scotia Grief Alliance overview.
- Guest Speaker.
- Grief Support & Community Needs: Sharing, Listening, and Learning Workshop.
- Panel discussion.

Guest Speakers

- **Linden Hardie** – MSW, RSW, Bereavement Coordinator, IWK.
- **Shauna Wilcox** – BScN, RN, MN, CHPCN(c), Clinical Nurse Specialist, IWK.

Topic: *Pediatric and Perinatal Palliative Care Principles & Children's Grief.*

Workshop: *Grief Support & Community Needs: Sharing, Listening, and Learning.*

Kristian Suen, Community Relations and Research Lead and Rune Black, Community Grief Facilitator for NSHPCA, led a community needs sharing and learning session to discuss grief-related needs, challenges, strengths and education needs for those working in grief in the Central Region.

Photo credit: Michael Kydd

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Panelists

- Jocelyne Tranquilla – RSW, Bereavement Coordinator: Integrated Palliative Care Service, Central Zone NS Health.
- Terri Milton – Librarian for the Valley Hospice Grief Library.
- Kaitlin Cantrell – Social Work and Programs Manager, Hospice Halifax.
- Kathryn Murphy – End of Life Educator & Death Doula, Norse Ridge Services.

Top Themes: Needs

- Inclusion & Diversity for providers and community.
- Fundamental shift from re-active to pro-active Grief Literacy.
- Sustainable and accessible funding.

Strengths

- Strong community interest, resources, and support options.
- Diverse approaches and broad participation across groups.
- Highly collaborative and passionate community.
- Strong awareness and attention to grief support.

Educational Needs For Grief Workers

- Grief Literacy & Cultural Change.
- Normalize conversations about grief, death, and loss.
- Shift from crisis-driven to proactive support approaches.
- Training & Skills Development.
- Human-centered training for volunteers, caregivers, and professionals.
- Strengthen competencies in grief and palliative support.
- Community Awareness.
- Improve public awareness and access to local grief resources.
- Support resource navigation and localized outreach.
- Knowledge Sharing.
- Facilitate cross-sector collaboration and peer learning.
- Share successful community models and best practices.
- Leadership & Systemic Change.
- Sustainable Funding.
- Support education that drives systemic, long-term change.

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Evaluation

All respondents rated the speaker and panelists between 4 and 5 out of 5. When asked whether they learned more about grief work in their area and gained new skills or insights relevant to their work, ratings ranged from 3 to 5 out of 5.

Key recommendations from participants

- Incorporate more hands-on activities and practical strategies for grief support, including self-care and ways to help others.
- Broaden outreach by intentionally inviting underrepresented communities and increasing promotional efforts to engage more participants.

Recommendation for Future Events

Expand content to address diverse types of grief, such as climate grief, pregnancy and infant loss, children's grief, serious illness, and suicide loss.

Next Steps

Provincial Symposium (November 18, 2025) and webinars.

Useful Links:

Nova Scotia Grief Alliance [website](#) | Canadian Grief Alliance [website](#) | Canadian Grief Alliance National Strategy – [Next Steps and Action Plan](#) | Healing Pathways [grant funding](#)
Healing Pathways – [Grieving Well](#) | Nova Scotia Health [Life Changes](#)