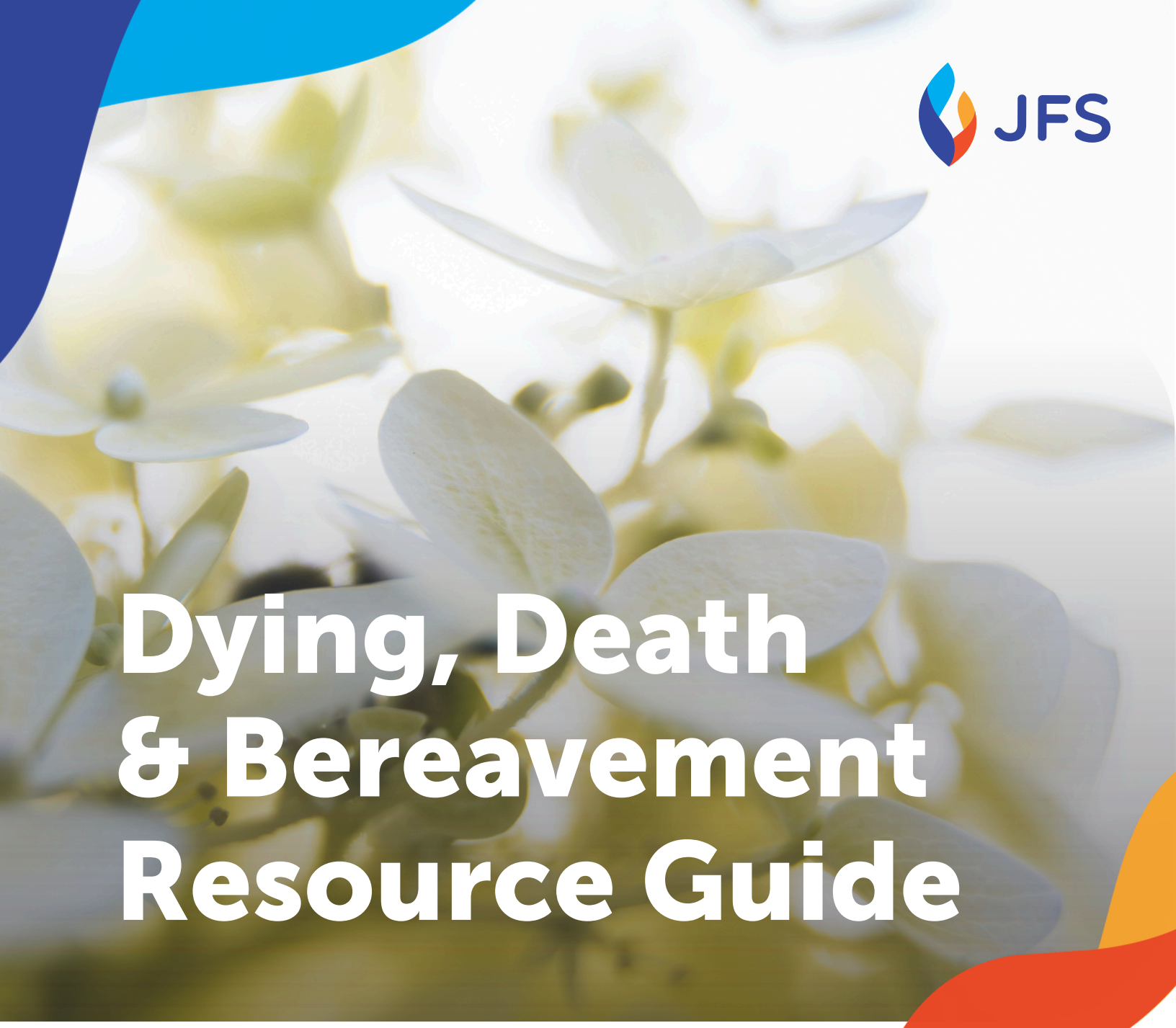


Dying, Death & Bereavement Resource Guide

Your guide to no- or low-cost and other death-related resources in the Vancouver area.

With special thanks to the Office of the Seniors Advocate of BC, Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health, and Marpole Oakridge Family Place (host of the South Vancouver Seniors Network).

Acknowledging that we live, work, play, and die (and many are buried) in the unceded, ancestral and traditional territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətaʔɬ / səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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Message from the Editor

There are many wonderful resources available for Vancouverites to utilize when facing issues of dying, death, burial and bereavement. Yet resources seem to be not only impossibly scattered, but they are also often difficult for many to afford. This can make navigating these situations arduous in the best of times, and even more difficult when navigating them through the lens of grief.

This guide has a duel focus. The first is to bring as many resources together into one guide as possible. This is a challenging task, of course, and valuable resources may be missed. In this regard, we invite you, our readers, to come forward with additional information about death-related resources – this is a living document and we welcome community recommendations.

The other focus of this resource guide is to offer as many cost-saving options as possible. We all know that dying, death, burial and even bereavement come with many expenses. Death is, unfortunately, an unavoidable part of the circle of life. There are many excellent resources in the Vancouver area for low-income individuals to access. This guide will be highlighting certain organizations at the end of each section we think are exceptionally helpful in this regard. The guide will also touch on provincial and country-wide benefits.

With reference to the multicultural practices included in this guide, we recognize that there are many cultures and communities not yet represented here. We invite submissions and advice for inclusion.

To provide additional information for the guide, or for questions or feedback, please reach out to us at any time.

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Message from the BC Seniors Advocate

One of the major challenges that seniors contacting my office express is how to navigate the numerous government and community support services when they need help.

Often, they are burned out from providing care for a loved one or are seeking services on their own behalf; many just want to know what options are available as they navigate a new, and possibly final, stage of life. Whether it's accessing home care, information about palliative care, or finding accurate information about advanced care planning, the stress experienced by many older people can be overwhelming.

Many people are uncertain about what to do just before death or after a loved one has died. This time can be quite stressful in and of itself, but add on the financial demands that accompany laying a family member to rest and closing their affairs, and the burden can be immense.

Therefore, I'm extremely supportive and grateful for the leadership of Jewish Family Services for taking concrete action to help people through the death, dying and bereavement processes.

Your efforts to identify a need and bring together like-minded partners to collaborate and lessen the emotional load that can accompany losing a loved one is commendable. It's often when people see a problem and take steps to resolve it that true change is made.

Without question this guide will be beacon of light for many people experiencing the heartbreak of losing someone they love. Congratulations on your achievement and the immense positive impact it will make in the lives of so many people in our community.



Sincerely,

Dan Levitt
BC Seniors Advocate

Common Questions and Where to Start?

"I don't have very much money, how can I afford a funeral and everything that goes with it?"

Many seniors live on a fixed income and may not have immediate access to funds needed to purchase burial space outright. In these cases, there are several options available:

A. Pre-Planning Arrangements

Most funeral homes and cemeteries offer flexible payment plans that allow families to pre-arrange services and cemetery property within their budget. These monthly payment options often come with promotional discounts, providing additional savings for those who plan ahead. If you decide to pre-pay for funeral services, here are some things to know about preneed contracts: https://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca/2014/08/your-preneed-cemetery-or-funeral-services-contract-rights/

B. Cremation Services

Cremation can be a more affordable alternative to traditional burial. Cremation plots typically cost significantly less than casket burial spaces, making this a viable option for cost-conscious families.

C. Educate Yourself

It's important to understand the range of costs involved in funeral planning. Funeral home services, merchandise such as caskets, flowers, and obituary placements all carry associated fees. Take the time to explore your options and determine what aligns with your values and financial situation.

Common Questions and Where to Start?

"I don't have a next-of-kin, who will arrange things after my death?"

When an individual passes away without a next-of-kin, the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia assumes responsibility for administering the estate. However, this process is typically lengthy and can take several months to resolve.

To avoid delays and ensure your wishes are carried out, it is strongly recommended to have a valid will in place that names a trusted executor - such as a lawyer, financial institution, or other professional. This allows for more timely and personalized administration of your estate. Additionally, having a will ensures that your assets can be distributed according to your wishes, including the option to leave a legacy gift to a charity of your choice, rather than having the estate default to the government.



Common Questions and Where to Start?

"What is the first thing I should do after someone passes away?"

Expected Passing at Home

If your loved one wants to die at home, or might die at home, it is important to get an Expected Death in the Home (EDitH) form in place through the Primary Care Practitioner (*See page 11 for information on this important form) This form must be renewed every three months. A Notification of Expected Death in the Home form is completed by the patient's physician and sent to the funeral home before the death. With the form in place, the death does not need to be 'pronounced'; the funeral home can pick up the body; and most importantly, paramedics, police (911) and the coroner will not have to attend, which is required under law for an unexpected or suspicious death. You can then call the Palliative Care Team (if applicable) or the funeral home.

Expected Passing (Care Home, Hospice, or Hospital)

If your loved one passes away in a care home, hospice, or hospital, your first call should be to the funeral home. This allows them to promptly arrange for your loved one to be brought into their care, as most of these facilities do not have the capacity to hold the deceased for an extended period.

Unexpected Passing (At Home or Elsewhere)

If the death occurs unexpectedly at home or in a public place, your first step should be to call 911 to report the death. Emergency services will guide you through the necessary next steps and coordinate with the appropriate authorities.



Common Questions and Where to Start?

"Is there government assistance to help cover funeral costs?"

Yes. For individuals who qualify, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction provides assistance to cover basic funeral expenses. Please note that this support cannot be arranged in advance - it is only available after a death has occurred.

The average wait time for an intake and approval meeting is approximately 5 - 7 days. If approved, the ministry will cover costs outlined within their guidelines, which typically include the basic funeral service, casket, cremation, and urn. Any additional expenses - such as death certificates, flowers, clergy honorariums, or obituary notices - are the responsibility of the next-of-kin.

"Are there any other options besides cremation and burial?"

Alternative Disposition Options in British Columbia

While there are a variety of alternative disposition options available in other parts of Canada and the United States beyond traditional burial and cremation, here in British Columbia, there are two additional options: green burial and body donation to science.

Both options involve specific requirements and additional steps, so it is strongly recommended that individuals communicate these wishes in advance. Pre-planning ensures that arrangements can be made appropriately and that your preferences are respected at the time of need. You can find more information on pre-planning on pages 16-18 of this guide.

There are also efforts underway in BC to legalize two eco-friendlier methods: alkaline hydrolysis (aka aqaumation) and natural organic reduction (aka human composting). Check out David Suzuki Foundation for an overview of green end-of-life options: https://davidsuzuki.org/living-green/green-end-of-life-options/

Common Questions and Where to Start?

"How do I find a reputable funeral home/provider?"

The BC Funeral Association has a partial list of providers in BC. Another idea is to consult with the Memorial Society of BC for referrals to BC-owned, independent funeral providers. See page 20 of this guide for more information about this organization

"What are the options for funeral services?"

Funeral and memorial services have evolved significantly over the past 25 years. Today, celebrations of life can take place in a variety of settings - such as places of worship, funeral homes, restaurants, clubhouses, rental halls, or even outdoor spaces like parks.

Planning a meaningful event can be overwhelming, especially during a time of loss. That's why we strongly recommend pre-planning wherever possible. This helps reduce the emotional and logistical burden on your loved ones and ensures your wishes are clearly understood and honored.



Common Questions and Where to Start?

"How else can I prepare for my own or a loved one's funeral?"

The first step in planning is simply talking. Have open conversations with your loved ones about your wishes and theirs. Once you've had that discussion, speak with a professional to help create a plan that reflects your values and preferences.

Most importantly, once your plan is in place, be sure to share it with your family. Clear communication and preparation can provide peace of mind and ease the burden during a difficult time.

*Important information about Expected Death at Home form:

If you or a loved one wants to die at home, or might die at home, it is important to get an Expected Death in the Home (EDitH) form in place through the Primary Care Practitioner.

This form must be renewed every three months.

A Notification of Expected Death in the Home form is completed by the patient's physician and sent to the funeral home before the death. With the form in place, the death does not need to be 'pronounced'; the funeral home can pick up the body; and most importantly, paramedics, police (911) and the coroner will not have to attend, which is required under law for an unexpected or suspicious death.

Click Here for the Expected Death in the Home (EDitH) form

Thank you to Shane Dixon, Manager, Bell & Burnaby Funeral Chapel and Chair of the British Columbia Funeral Association and Stephanie Ng, Cemetery and Funeral Pre-Planning & Immediate Need Advisor, Ocean View, Forest Lawn, Victory Memorial, Boal Chapel Cemeteries and Funeral Homes for much of the information above.

Common Questions and Where to Start?

"What important considerations do you need to make as a Jewish queer and/or trans person when dying, in death and after death in BC?"

- While Haro Park is queer-friendly, BC has no LGBTQ+-specific long-term care, assisted living, palliative, or hospice care. Louis Brier and Weinberg Residences are BC's only Jewish-run homes, but admission is not guaranteed, as most placements are through Vancouver Coastal Health's Priority Access program. A limited number of private beds are available.
- Some care homes require shared bedrooms or structured socializing, such as assigned dining seating. You or your caregiver should advocate for compatible Jewish and LGBTQ+-friendly roommates and social connections.
- Orthodox Jewish care homes and facilities operated by Providence Health Care may have policies that conflict with services such as MAiD.
- Receiving an end-of-life blessing from a rabbi of a particular denomination may depend on synagogue membership and standing. Fee-for-service rabbis may also be available.
- If you are trans or nonbinary, make clear plans to help ensure you are not deadnamed or misgendered after your death.
- Include clear instructions in your will about how you want your remains handled—such as Jewish or civic burial, cremation, human composting, or green burial—and how you wish to be remembered. Discuss your wishes with family and loved ones, tell them where to find your will, and make arrangements in advance when possible. Jewish burial, in particular, may need to be arranged quickly.
- Several Chevra Kadisha (Jewish burial societies) operate in BC, primarily through synagogues. Some offer more inclusive practices for LGBTQ+ people. Queer-friendly Jewish death doulas are also available in Vancouver through the Shomer Collective, and Community Chevra Kadisha is a progressive Jewish initiative in Vancouver.
- If you are in an interfaith relationship, burial together may be difficult under some Jewish denominational rules, particularly if a non-Jewish partner wishes to be buried or have their ashes interred with you.
- Jewish burial can be expensive, making advance financial planning important.

– From JQT Vancouver's The BC Jewish Queer & Trans Seniors Resource Guide*

*The JQT Seniors Initiative, hosted by JQT Vancouver, is a volunteer-led Community Response Network working to identify and address gaps in care for Jewish queer and trans seniors in BC. In 2023, it launched the BC Jewish Queer & Trans Seniors Resource Guide to help older Jewish queer and trans people navigate barriers to healthcare, community care, dying, death, and burial, and make informed decisions about their options in BC.

End-of-Life Resources

- Palliative/Hospice Care
- End-of-Life/Advance Care Planning
- Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) Information
- Other Resources

Palliative/End-of-Life Care and Hospice

BC Centre for Palliative Care	BC Centre for Palliative Care is a provincial organization established and funded by the BC Ministry of Health to accelerate the spread of best practices and innovations in palliative care. They have seven community health centres. St. Paul's and Vancouver General Hospitals both have palliative care units. They do hospice referrals, bereavement calls, resource connections, expected-death-in-home assistance.	https://www.bc-cpc.ca/
BC Hospice and Palliative Care Association	An open non-profit membership organization dedicated to promoting and bringing awareness of hospice palliative care to British Columbians and Yukoners. There is an array of hospice palliative care programs and services offered by members across British Columbia and the Yukon to the bereaved, grieving, terminally ill, and their loved ones. Hospice services are accessible to people of all ages, genders, sexual orientations, cultures, religions, and ethnicities.	https://bchpca.org/
Palliative Access Line (part of BCHPCA)	Provides telephone intake for access to palliative care services for people living with life-limiting illness and their families. Services are provided in the home, a hospice, hospital or care facility depending on the stage of illness and the client's needs. Support services include nursing care, home support, personal care, pain management, and home hospice specialist services.	604-742-4010 Vancouver 604-984-3743 North Shore 604-675-3644 Richmond 604-892-6051 Sea-to-Sky www.vch.ca/en/service/how-to-access-home-and-community-care-services

Province of BC Palliative Care Benefits Program	The BC Palliative Care Benefits program is available to B.C. residents with active MSP coverage, who have reached the end stage of a life-threatening disease or illness and wish to receive palliative care wherever they are living.	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/practitioner-professional-resources/pharmacare/plans/plan-p-bc-palliative-care-benefits-program
Vancouver Coastal Health Palliative Care Team **For more information see page 21.**	Provides a range of palliative and end-of-life support and services for people living with serious illness, including their families, loved ones, and caregivers. Palliative and end-of-life care focuses on maximizing comfort and quality of life while following each person's values, beliefs and wishes.	https://www.vch.ca/en/health-topics/palliative-and-end-life-care
Vancouver Hospice Society	Palliative Care and Bereavement Support; there is a daily fee for hospice but can be waived if client in financial need; referrals via Primary Care Provider or Palliative Care Team.	https://www.vancouverhospice.org

End of Life Planning/Advance Care Planning

BC Funeral Association	The BC Funeral Association is a non-profit organization that represents the voice and values of their members, and are the foremost authority and experts on all things relating to the funeral profession in British Columbia.	www.bcfunerals.com
Dying With Dignity	More information under MAiD below. Provides an advance care planning toolkit (first link) and other education and resources (second link).	https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/education-resources/advance-care-planning/ https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/education-and-resources/
End of Life Doula Association of Canada	Providing personalized End of Life Care, advocacy, community awareness and support. Individual doulas may offer their services for lower cost for low-income individuals. Must ask individual doula.	https://endoflifedoulaassociation.org
Fraser Health	Advance care planning including help with questions like, "How do I start planning?", "Who should I talk to and what should we talk about?", and "What resources are available to help me plan?"	www.fraserhealth.ca Advance Care Resources: https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/advance-care-planning/advance-care-planning-resources
Fraser Health: My Voice in Action Advance Care Workbook	This supportive, fill in the blank style booklet or "health passport" guides you through the steps of advance care planning. You can request a workbook on the website. Also available in Punjabi.	https://patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca/file/my-advance-care-plan-a-companion-workbook-to-my-vo-428644.pdf

Memorial Society of BC **For more information, see page 20**	A not-for-profit organization helping people access affordable, simple and dignified funerals for more than 65 years: · Reduced pricing on funeral costs in partnership with independent, BC-owned funeral providers · Knowledgeable and compassionate support of members and their loved ones · Safe and secure online account to store vital statics and arrangement information · 24/7 referral to contracted funeral providers · Education on important end-of-life issues Life membership is $50	https://memorialsocietybc.org/resources/
Nidus	Provides British Columbians with education, support, and assistance with personal planning and Representation Agreements, and have developed institutional expertise about the creation, use, and support around these important planning tools.	www.nidus.ca
People's Law School **For more information, see page 20**	Free articles and publications on preparing a will, estate planning, dealing with a death, dealing with an estate, dying without a will, challenging a will and the rights of beneficiaries. Publications reviewed by lawyers but not intended as legal advice.	https://www.peopleslawschool.ca/category/wills-estates/ 1-800-565-5297 (604-687-4680 in the Lower Mainland) for referrals
Pro bono lawyers	Operates a free lawyer referral service and several pro bono programs serving the critical legal needs of people and non-profit organizations across BC including advance planning for a lower cost through the Everyone Legal Clinic.	Everyone Legal Clinic: https://www.accessprobono.ca/program/everyone-legal-clinic
Province of BC	Includes steps to take to create an advance care plan, videos, brochures and Frequently Asked Questions.	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/health-safety/advance-care-planning

Seniors First BC Elder Law Clinic For more information, see page 21	Seniors First BC's Elder Law Clinic program offers pro bono legal advice to eligible low-income older adults residing in BC on a wide range of legal matters, including preparing Advance Planning documents.	https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/programs/elder-law-clinic/ Seniors Abuse and Information Line: 604-437-1940 or Toll Free: 1-866-437-1940 for more information or to arrange a consultation with the legal team
Speak UP! Start the Conversation about End-of Life Care	Educational resources. The website includes a link to local resources in all Canadian jurisdictions.	https://www.advancecareplanning.ca
Vancouver Coastal Health	Request Advance Care planning workshops.	https://engage.vch.ca/advance-care-planning-workshops

Other Resources

Consumer Protection BC (know your funeral rights!)	Certain aspects of funerals services are regulated in BC to protect you during a vulnerable time. Funeral homes and funeral directors must hold a license with them, be trained, and meet certain requirements.	https://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca/consumer-help/consumer-information-funeral-rights/
Queer Aging BC (previously known as Dignity Seniors Society)	QABC is dedicated to affecting systemic change that creates culturally appropriate services for 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors across British Columbia. Provides help with end-of-life and financial planning.	https://queeragingbc.ca/

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

BC Ministry of Health	Website describes how the MAID process works in the province, with links to each health authority.	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/home-community-care/care-options-and-cost/end-of-life-care/medical-assistance-in-dying
Bridge C-14	A Network of Peer-to-Peer Connections and Community Supports through all stages of Medical Assistance in Dying.	bridgec14.org
Dying with Dignity Canada	A national not-for-profit human-rights charity committed to improving quality of dying, protecting end-of-life rights, and helping people across Canada avoid unwanted suffering by advocating for better and more accessible end-of-life rights, supporting individuals and families navigating a request for MAID, as well as educating people across Canada about their legal end-of-life options.	Toll Free: 1-844-395-3640 https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/
Virtual Hopsice	Offers guidance on how to have difficult discussions with friends and family about MAID.	www.virtualhospice.ca/MAID

Highlighted Organizations:

Memorial Society of BC

A not-for-profit organization helping people access affordable, simple, and dignified funerals for more than 65 years:

- Reduced pricing on funeral costs in partnership with independent, BC-owned funeral providers
- Knowledgeable and compassionate support of members and their loved ones
- Safe and secure online account to store vital statics and arrangement information
- 24/7 referral to contracted funeral providers
- Education on important end-of-life issues

People's Law School

- Started by a group of law students who wished to give free legal advice to the public
- There are many on-line programs and classes
- Best known for its many publications
- Empowers you to Do It Yourself
- You can call: 1-800-565-5297 (604-687-4680 in the Lower Mainland) for referrals
- Information on unbundling services (for cost savings)



Highlighted Organizations:

Seniors First BC – Elder Law Clinic

Seniors First BC's Elder Law Clinic program offers pro bono legal advice to eligible low income older adults residing in BC on a wide range of legal matters, including:

- Preparing Advance Planning documents, such as wills, powers of attorney, and representation agreements.
- Explaining legal proceedings and what to expect in court.
- Reviewing court documents.
- Preparing cases and submissions.
- Representation at certain court hearings.
- Assistance in matters of adult guardianship.
- General legal advice.

While they do not offer legal services in either family or criminal law, they can direct persons to organizations who may be able to assist.

Vancouver Coastal Health Palliative Care Team

Palliative Care provides comfort and quality of life care for people living with life-limiting illness and their families. Palliative Care includes the physical, emotional, social and spiritual care needs while focusing on people's goals, values and beliefs. A person may receive palliative care while also choosing to receive curative treatment for their serious illness.

- To be referred for Palliative Care services connect with your GP/NP; health care team or self-refer.
- People with a life-limiting illness can receive palliative care anytime along the care continuum.
- Options for care can be provided at home, hospital, hospice and/or Long Term Care

Death and After Death Resources

- General Resources
- Cultural and Religious Resources*
- Other Resources

*Please inform us of information on your culture if not included here. Online document will be regularly updated.

Death Resources

BC Coroners Service	Information on reporting a death, registering a death, death certificates, and wills registry and any concerns regarding a death.	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/death/coroners-service To report a death, call either 1-855-207-0637 or 604-815-4090
BC Funeral Association **For more information, see page 25**	The BC Funeral Association is a non-profit organization that represents the voice and values of their members and are the foremost authority and experts on all things relating to the funeral profession in BC.	https://www.bcfunerals.com
BC Government: After a Death Checklist	BC Government's After a Death Checklist provides resources when someone dies and you need to look after their affairs. This checklist helps you determine who to notify and keeps you organized.	2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/after-a-death/after_death_checklist.pdf
Body Donation Program, University of British Columbia	Individuals who wish to make a significant contribution to the program can choose to donate indefinitely. A portion of their body may be retained to benefit all students of anatomy for years to come.	https://cps.med.ubc.ca/body-donation-program/
British Columbia Organ Donor Registry	BC's Organ Donor Registry is the official registry of a resident's decision on organ donation.	https://register.transplant.bc.ca
Canada Bereavement Registry	Helping the bereaved by finding life insurance, pensions and stopping unwanted mail and phone calls.	canada-bereavement-registry.ca
Green Burial BC	Provides up-to-date list of green or natural burial sites in BC.	https://www.greenburialbc.ca/

Memorial Society of BC **For more information, see page 20**	A not-for-profit organization, offering comfort, convenience and price protection for funerals. When someone passes, you can phone them 24/7, and they will provide the contact details for approved funeral providers offering contracted Memorial Society member pricing at a discount on posted rates. Life membership is $50.	www.memorialsocietybc.org

Cultural and Religious Resources

BC Muslim Association	Provides the funeral services to the Muslim community in the Lower Main Land.	https://thebcma.com/Funeral.aspx
Chevre Kadisha (The Schara Tzedek Cemetery Board)	For traditional Jewish burial in the Vancouver area.	https://www.cemeteryboard.com/the-chevra-kadisha/
Community Chevre	Queer-led Chevra Kadisha and learning community working to make death, dying, and grief rituals accessible to all in the Jewish community.	https://www.instagram.com/communitychevra/?hl=en
First Nations Resources	First Nations Health Authority End-of-Life Journey.	https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/healthy-living/end-of-life-journey

Cultural and Religious Resources, cont.

Resources, Chinese Tradition	PDF of booklet on death, dying and bereavement from Vancouver Coastal Health.	https://vch.eduhealth.ca/en/permalink/phem3435
Resources in Punjabi	PDF booklet on death, dying and bereavement from Vancouver Coastal Health.	https://vch.eduhealth.ca/en/permalink/phem2073

Please inform us of information on your culture if not included here. Online document will be updated annually.

Other Resources

Consumer Protection BC	Know your rights in BC when it comes to funeral costs.	https://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca/consumer-help/consumer-information-funeral-rights/

Highlighted Organization:

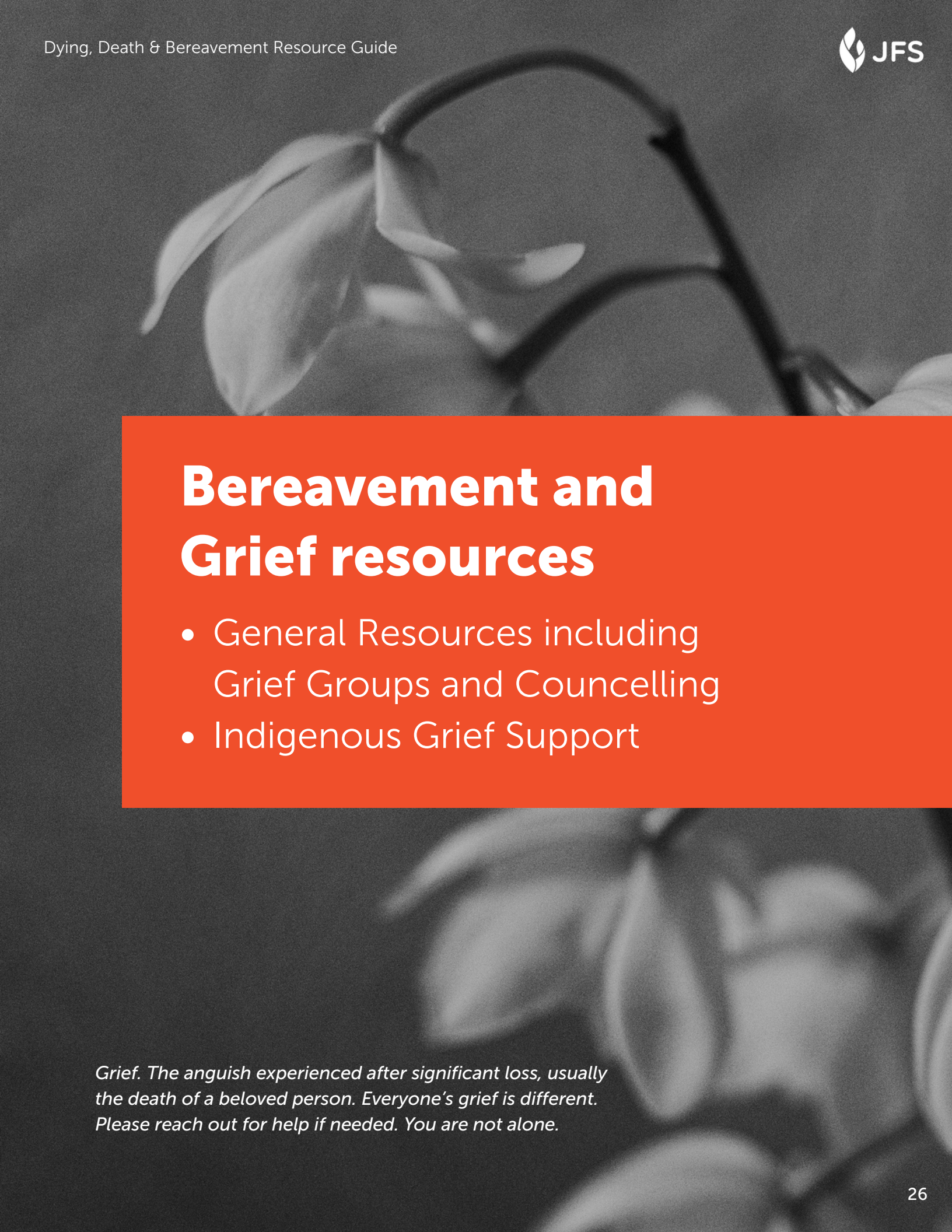
BC Funeral Association

The BC Funeral Association is a non-profit organization that represents the voice and values of their members and are the foremost authority and experts on all things relating to the funeral profession in British Columbia.

https://www.bcfunerals.com/here-for-you
Member Directory: https://www.bcfunerals.com/funeral-providers/

The BC Funeral association has many in-depth death-related resources including:

- Guide on Death and Dying
- Funeral Home and Cemetery Directory
- Resources to Navigate funeral arrangements



Bereavement and Grief resources

- General Resources including Grief Groups and Councelling
- Indigenous Grief Support

Grief. The anguish experienced after significant loss, usually the death of a beloved person. Everyone's grief is different. Please reach out for help if needed. You are not alone.

General Bereavement and Grief Resources

BC Bereavement Helpline **For more information, see page 33**	This provincial Helpline has assisted over 40,000 calls and emails since its inception in 1988 and continues to be the only free, grief-specific helpline via phone and email in Canada. Your call or email will be answered by a volunteer who, through the BCBH Resource Directory, can access information for 300+ organizations that help those coping with grief and loss located in over 80 communities in BC. Volunteers are also trained to provide compassionate listening, so if all you need is to talk to someone, the Helpline volunteers are there to listen. Your call is free, confidential, anonymous, and will be treated with care in helping you find the most appropriate support for your specific type of loss.	The helpline is open Monday through Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm 604-738-9950 Toll free 1-877-779-2223 contact@bcbh.ca https://bcbh.ca/grief-support/our-helpline/
Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association/CHPCA Grief and Bereavement Resource Repository	Provides a Grief and Bereavement Resource Repository which is a collection of useful links and resources to help you and your loved ones cope with grief.	chpca.ca https://www.chpca.ca/awareness/national-grief-and-bereavement-day/grief-and-bereavement-resource-repository

Canadian Virtual Hospice	Online portal for learning about grief. No charge for Canadian users.	www.MyGrief.ca
Century House Seniors Peer Counselling	One-to-one support by trained senior volunteers. No charge.	604-519-1064 (New Westminster) https://www.centuryhouseassociation.com/service-group/peer-support-program/
Dying with Dignity	Booklet on grief - specifically addressing grief related to MAiD deaths.	https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/education-resources/grief-and-maid/
Fraser Health Crisis Line	Emotional support and resource information. No charge.	1-877-820-7444 604-951-8855
Health Link BC	Resources on grief and grieving.	healthlinkbc.ca/search?kw=grief+grieving_
Jewish Family Services Counselling Program	JFS offers two counselling programs. The Intern Counselling program is offered by Interns in the final segment of their Masters degrees at a subsidized rate. The Registered Counselling program is offered by Registered Clinical Counsellors who hold Masters degrees. The fees are sliding scale, based upon household income. JFS provides up to 16 sessions for each program and sessions take place virtually or in-person at the JFS office in East Vancouver.	https://www.jfsvancouver.ca/services/counselling/ Leave a voicemail at 604-558-5719 (Care Line) and press the prompt for counselling services.
Living Through Loss Counselling Society of BC	Individual one-on-one counselling; 1 hour sessions for a fee; occasional group therapy sessions.	778-931-5013 livingthroughloss.ca

Living Systems	Various offices in the Lower Mainland. This is a registered society offering counselling for families and individuals on a sliding fee scale.	604-926-5496 www.livingsystems.ca/counselling
Lumara Grief and Bereavement Care Society (formerly Camp Kerry)	Provides education, support, and counselling services to individuals, families, and groups.	604-553-4663 1-866-958-6272 lumarasociety.org
MAiD Family Support Services	Provides compassionate, lived experience one-on-one support and connection to people helping a loved one who is considering or planning for MAiD or those who are grieving a loss due to MAiD.	www.maidfamilysupport.ca
May's Place	May's Place recognizes dying, death and grieving as a part of life. They are committed to compassionate care that maintains dignity and supports both you and your family. Providence Health Care staff operate May's Place.	604-606-0380 providencehealthcare.org/en/locations/mays-place-hospice

MyGrief.ca	An online resource to help people move through their grief from the comfort of their own home, at their own pace. It can help you understand your grief and approach some of the most difficult questions that may arise. It was developed by people who have experienced the death of someone important to them and grief specialists.	https://www.mygrief.ca
Providence Health Care Grief Support Group	'Being with Grief' is a one-time session, offered twice a month.	604-659-1160
The Richmond Grief Support Group	A weekly support group that offers a safe place, open hearts, affirmation and hope to individuals who have experienced loss.	(604) 675-3644 ext. 24271 (604) 675-3644 ext. 24273 vch.ca/en/service/richmond-grief-support-group
St. John Hospice (UBC)	St. John Hospice provides compassionate care to maintain dignity and quality of life. Providence Health Care staff operate St. John Hospice.	604-806-9686 Video tour: youtube.com/watch?v=zDyNHfxG1ls providencehealthcare.org/en/locations/st-john-hospice

Vancouver Grief Society (including grief groups); for more information, see page 34	Formerly the Lower Mainland Grief Recovery Society, the Vancouver Grief Society (VGS) is a nonprofit charitable organization that offers grief support group programs for those who have suffered the death of a significant person. The organization helps participants better understand and live with their loss in a non-judgmental and compassionate environment. VGS support groups meet for two hours once a week for six weeks. Facilitators offer a safe, confidential space, providing information about the grieving process and its myriad psychological, emotional, physical, social, and existential effects. Participants are invited to reflect on these teachings and share their experiences. Though there is no requirement to speak, participants often find relief in expressing their shock, pain, and sadness and knowing they are not alone in these feelings. Cost is $225 for six sessions, but the VGS will not turn away anyone on the basis of ability to pay.	https://lmgr.ca For grief groups: https://lmgr.ca/support-groups/
Vancouver Hospice Society (including grief counselling)	Vancouver Hospice Society provides compassionate end-of-life and bereavement care for individuals and their families in Vancouver. They offer individual and family counselling, bereavement walking groups, and bereavement support. There is no charge for up to 6 sessions on bereavement counselling. Referrals come from the Palliative Access Line.	www.vancouverhospice.org/services/grief-support 604- 737-7305 Video tour: youtube.com/watch?v=LfQiAAKhlqc&t=3s vancouverhospice.org

Indigenous Support

Hope for Wellness Help Line	Offers 24/7 access for all Indigenous peoples across Canada to counselling via online chat and telephone. The Hope for Wellness counsellors have knowledge on a variety of topics and cultural competence. Available in English, French on request, Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.	1-855-242-3310 online chat function available at www.hopeforwellness.ca
KUU-US Crisis Line Society	Culturally safe crisis line specific to Indigenous peoples living in BC.	Adults/Elders 250-723-4050 Child/Youth 250-723-2040 Toll free 1-800-588-8717 Métis Line (1-833-MétisBC) 1-833-638-4722 https://www.kuu-uscrisisline.com/
Slaxin Lelum	Provides culturally diverse support services creating a safe and caring environment for people to connect with self and community by healing their trauma to achieve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing grounded in Indigenous wisdom and resilience.	604-255-2394 www.slaxinlelum.org
South Vancouver Neighbourhood House	Grief and Loss Circles are offered for anyone in the community provided by an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper. The circles may include drumming, blessing, smudging, and sharing your grief.	604-324-6212 ext 144 www.southvan.org

Highlighted Organization:

BC Bereavement Hotline

This provincial Helpline has assisted over 40,000 calls and emails since its inception in 1988 and continues to be the only free, grief-specific helpline via phone and email in Canada.

- 1-877-779-2223 or 1-604-738-9950 | https://bcbh.ca/grief-support/our-helpline/
- Since 1988 - free line of support across BC.
- Offers helpline for emotional support and referral services.
- Connects callers to grief support services such as support groups in the community.
- Trauma-informed professional listening.
- Focused on traumatic loss.
- Support groups for traumatic loss.
- This provincial Helpline has assisted over 40,000 calls and emails since its inception in 1988 and continues to be the only free, grief-specific helpline via phone and email in Canada.
- When contacting the BC Bereavement Helpline, the call or email will be answered by a caring, compassionate volunteer who, through the BCBH Resource Directory, can access information for 300+ organizations that help those coping with grief and loss located in over 80 communities in BC.
- Volunteers are also trained to provide compassionate listening, so if all you need is to talk to someone, the Helpline volunteers are there to listen. Your call is free, confidential, anonymous, and will be treated with care in helping you find the most appropriate support for your specific type of loss.

Highlighted Organization:

The Vancouver Grief Society

The Vancouver Grief Society (formerly the Lower Mainland Grief Recovery Society) has been working in the grief and bereavement community in metro Vancouver for 35 years, offering grief groups for those who have lost a significant person and educational presentations and workshops for organizations seeking to improve grief literacy.

Grief group information:

- Six weeks long.
- Led by skilled facilitators, these groups provide a safe space for connecting and sharing with others who've undergone a similar loss.
- In addition, facilitators present educational information about grief to provide context and normalize reactions to the life-altering experience of losing a significant person.
- The groups are structured in such a way that participants are able to meet once a week, for six weeks.
- Each session begins with information about the grieving process and how it affects people physically and emotionally.
- Participants are invited to gather in small groups to discuss their experiences regarding the topics presented.
- No person is obliged to speak, and all are advised that everything shared in the sessions remains strictly confidential.
- They create a safe environment that allows participants to explore their shock, pain, sadness, guilt and regrets and to discover that others also share these emotions.
- Cost $225 for six sessions.

For community groups, health facilities, and businesses, the Society offers half- and full-day presentations and workshops. Tailored to each organization's needs, these events help participants more fully understand grief and bereavement so as to develop policies and practices to best serve their staff and clients.



Affordability/Benefits

- Government of Canada and British Columbia Benefits
- Canada Death Benefit Eligibility
- Provincial Burial Program Eligibility

Government of Canada and British Columbia

Death Benefit, Canada **For more information including eligibility, amount of benefit and how to apply, see page 37**	The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) death benefit is a one-time payment, payable to the estate or other eligible individuals, on behalf of a deceased CPP contributor.	https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-death-benefit.html
Palliative Care Benefit	The BC Palliative Care Benefits program is available to B.C. residents with active MSP coverage, who have reached the end stage of a life-threatening disease or illness and wish to receive palliative care wherever they are living.	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/practitioner-professional-resources/pharmacare/plans/plan-p-bc-palliative-care-benefits-program
Provincial Burial Program (Funeral Cost Benefit) **For more information including what is covered and eligibility criteria, see page 38**	A supplement may be provided to pay necessary funeral costs of any person who dies in BC if the estate of the deceased person or any responsible person has no immediate resources to meet these costs. There is no requirement that the deceased person, or the person's family, must be BC Employment and Assistance recipients to qualify for the supplement. Costs are to be recovered whenever possible. This supplement is available under the Employment and Assistance Regulation.	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/burial-cremation-supplement
Survivors Benefit	The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) survivor's pension is a monthly payment paid to the legal spouse or common-law partner of the deceased contributor.	https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-survivor-pension.html

Canada Death Benefit Eligibility

To qualify for the death benefit, the deceased must have made contributions to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) for at least:

- one-third of the calendar years in their contributory period for the base CPP, but no less than 3 calendar years, or
- 10 calendar years.

For deaths occurring on or after January 1, 2025, the death benefit includes a top-up. To qualify for the top-up amount, the deceased must qualify for the death benefit and:

- have never received a disability benefit, post-retirement disability benefit or retirement pension under the CPP, and
- not have a surviving spouse or common-law partner who is eligible to receive a survivor's pension.

Taken from the official website of the government of Canada
https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions/cpp/cpp-death-benefit.html



Provincial Burial Program Eligibility

Necessary funeral costs may be paid for persons who die in BC when no resources are available from the estate of the deceased person or from any of the responsible persons. If there are sufficient resources available to the responsible persons or from the estate, the ministry will not pay the funeral supplement. Co-funding may be considered when resources available to responsible persons or from the estate cannot pay the entire cost.

There is no requirement that the deceased person or the person's family be BC Employment and Assistance recipients to qualify for the supplement.

Any funeral expenses paid by the ministry are a debt due to government and may be recovered by the ministry.

Ministry clients who were BCEA recipients immediately prior to their death, and who were temporarily outside of BC, but within Canada, may be eligible for a funeral supplement if prior approval is granted by the ministry.

The ministry does not pay for any funeral service costs that are incurred outside of BC if the deceased person was not a BCEA recipient. Funeral service costs for non-recipients may be paid if the body is transported back to BC at no cost to the ministry.

Taken from the official website of the government of British Columbia
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/burial-cremation-supplement



Glossary of Terms

Legal Terms

Advance directive
A living will or durable power of attorney in which a person states their wishes regarding medical treatment in the event of mental incompetency or an inability to communicate.

Executor
An executor is the person named in a will to manage and distribute the deceased's estate according to the instructions in the will. They are responsible for handling all aspects of the estate administration, including gathering assets, paying debts and taxes, and distributing remaining assets to beneficiaries.

Estate
An estate refers to the sum of a person's assets and liabilities, both real and personal property, at the time of their death. It encompasses everything they own, including land, possessions, financial holdings, and any debts they owe.

Probate
Probate is a legal process that verifies the validity of a will and confirms the authority of the executor to manage the deceased's estate. It essentially validates the will and provides the executor with the legal power to distribute the deceased's assets according to the will's instructions.

Public Guardian and Trustee
(PGT) is a British Columbia government agency that protects the legal and financial interests of vulnerable individuals and acts as a trustee, guardian, or administrator, ensuring the well-being and proper management of assets and affairs when individuals cannot do so themselves.

Power of attorney
In British Columbia, a Power of Attorney (POA) is a legal document that allows an individual to appoint someone to manage their financial and legal affairs when they are unable to do so themselves, either temporarily or permanently.

Representation agreement
A Representation Agreement is a legal document available to adults in British Columbia for personal planning. It allows an individual to authorize one or more personal supporters to be their representative to help them manage their affairs and, if necessary, to make decisions on their behalf in case of illness, injury, or disability.

Medical and End-Life Terms

Capacity/competence
Refers to a person's ability to understand information related to a decision and appreciate the consequences of their choices, especially when making legally binding decisions.

DNR (Do Not Resuscitate)
A medical order instructing healthcare provider not to perform CPR or other resuscitation measures if a person's heart stops or breathing ceases.

End-of-life care
Focuses on providing comfort, dignity, and support to individuals and their families facing the final stages of life. It encompasses palliative care, which can be received at home, in hospice, assisted living, or long-term care facilities.

Hospice
Focuses on providing specialized, compassionate care for individuals with life-limiting illnesses, emphasizing comfort, dignity, and quality of life in their final days or weeks.

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)
The process where a qualified medical professional can help an eligible individual end their life if they are experiencing unbearable suffering due to an incurable medical condition. It's a legal and regulated practice in Canada, including BC, with specific eligibility criteria and safeguards in place.

Palliative care
A specialized approach to healthcare focused on improving the quality of life for individuals with serious illnesses, and their families, by managing symptoms and providing support.

Terminal illness
A disease that cannot be cured or adequately treated and is expected to lead to the patient's death.

Disposition and Funeral Terms

Aquamation (alkaline hydrolysis)
The process using a water-based solution and alkaline compounds to break down the body into its basic elements, avoiding the use of fossil fuels and reducing environmental impact. It is not yet legal in BC.

Cremation
A process that reduces the human body to its basic elements using intense heat, resulting in what is commonly called cremated remains or ashes.

Disposition
The process of handling a deceased person's body, whether through burial or cremation.

Green burial
Returning a body to the earth in a way that minimizes environmental impact.

Human composting
The process of transforming human remains into soil through controlled decomposition.

Interment
The act of burying human remains or cremated remains in a designated place, such as a cemetery.



Cultural and Spiritual Terms

Chevra Kadisha
Also known as the Jewish Burial Society, is a group of volunteers who prepare the bodies of deceased Jews for burial according to Jewish law.

Elder (in Indigenous and spiritual contexts)
A respected individual recognized for their deep understanding of cultural traditions, spiritual knowledge, and lived experiences.

Shiva
A week long mourning period in the Jewish tradition.

Taharah (Jewish ritual purification)
Cleansing, ritually washing, and dressing the deceased's body.

Washing of the body (Islamic practice)
According to Islamic practices, family members of the same gender as the deceased are expected to bathe and shroud the body for burial.

Support and Grief Terms

Anticipatory grief
The emotional distress experienced when anticipating the loss of a loved one or the end of one's own life due to a terminal illness or other significant life change.

Bereavement
The state of experiencing loss, typically the death of a loved one. It's a period of grief and mourning, involving emotional, social, and practical adjustments to life without the deceased.

Grief counselling
Counseling intended to assist people who have been bereaved in coping with their grief.

Legacy work
In the context of end-of-life care, refers to activities that allow individuals to create a lasting impact and share their life stories, values, and experiences with loved ones before their passing.

Important Checklists

• End of Life Planning

- [ ] Prepare a will
- [ ] Appoint Power of Attorney
- [ ] Appoint Representative for health and personal care
- [ ] Make Advance Care Plan
- [ ] Review Insurance Policies
- [ ] Familiarize yourself with Canadian and Provincial benefits
- [ ] Pre-plan your funeral
- [ ] Prepare a contact list of individuals who should be notified in a medical emergency or death
- [ ] Write an obituary or jot down information you would like included
- [ ] Decide where obituary and memorial information should appear
- [ ] Indicate your preference for burial (casket or green) or cremation
- [ ] You will need to decide:
    a. Cemetery lot location
    b. Casket type; cremation urn type
    c. Vault or sectional crypt
    d. Type of service
    e. The contact details for the funeral home you designate to care for you

• Organizing Your End-of-Life Information

- [ ] Designate someone you trust and give them instructions on accessing the documents above. (You should have a home safe or safety deposit box to store copies of the documents).
- [ ] Make a list of the below, including where they can be found:
    a. Passport, driver's license, health care card, and social insurance number
    b. Birth certificate, marriage license, and divorce papers, if any
    c. Bank account and investment account information
    d. The usernames and passwords for your online accounts
    e. Anything you want to be destroyed after you pass away, such as personal diaries that you don't want people to read
- [ ] Instructions about any digital assets you own, including what you have, where they're stored, and how to access them

What to do When Someone Dies:

- [ ] If the death was expected, talk to the medical professionals
- [ ] If the death was unexpected, contact emergency services (Call 9-1-1) or the BC Coroners Service
- [ ] Let important people know, this could include family or friends
- [ ] Find the will and estate information, determine the executor or administrator
- [ ] Decide if you want to use a funeral home
- [ ] Find a Funeral Home
- [ ] Register the death and get the death certificate(s)
- [ ] Plan a funeral or memorial if not already pre-planned
- [ ] Get financial or emotional support
- [ ] Cancel services and accounts for the person who died

Below is a list of documents that are useful when dealing with a death:

(Since every death is different, you might not need everything listed.)

- [ ] Death certificate
- [ ] Will
- [ ] Passport
- [ ] Identification cards, which may include Social Insurance Card, driver's license, BC Services Card, or others
- [ ] Birth certificate
- [ ] Letters of probate or administration
- [ ] Property documents
- [ ] Title/deed
- [ ] Tax and lease information
- [ ] Mortgage statements
- [ ] Vehicle ownership and registration
- [ ] Financial information
- [ ] Bank cards or statements
- [ ] Tax information
- [ ] Line of credit or loan statements
- [ ] Investments and shareholder agreements
- [ ] Stock and bond certificates
- [ ] Insurance policies, group benefits coverage
- [ ] Citizenship, residency or immigration documentation
- [ ] Marriage certificate, divorce or separation papers
- [ ] Retirement accounts and pension statements

Notes

Notes

Dying, Death & Bereavement Resource Guide

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