

The PCSBV Bulletin

November 2022



Palliative Care Society
of the Bow Valley

WORLD

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES DAY

November 1



Imagine the impact that a unified and compassionate community would have on the lives of its members. Whether you imagine a local community or one that exists on the international stage, it is undeniable that individuals coming together to help one another is powerful.

November 1st is World Compassionate Communities Day. This special day is celebrated around the world and aims to unite individuals coping with death, caregiving and grief. World Compassionate Communities Day focuses primarily on local groups and individuals who show compassion to members of their community coping with the difficult emotions that surround death. The day is grounded in the belief that death, grief and caregiving are everyone's responsibility, and that individuals coming together to support each other can have a significant impact on those nearing the end of their life and their families.

While many celebrate World Compassionate Communities Day by focusing on their own community, it can be valuable to look elsewhere for examples of communities uniting to help their most vulnerable members. For example, members of the state of Kerala in India recognized that their community's clinical model of palliative care was failing because people had unmet spiritual, emotional and social needs that clinics could not address. In response, members of the community came together to organize small groups of volunteers who would assist individuals coping with death.



This included raising money to help feed affected families and creating educational materials about the transmissibility of certain diseases. In addition, medical staff began to travel to the homes of patients to provide care. This community activism led the Government of Kerala to develop a state palliative care policy. As a result of this policy, over 80% of India's palliative care institutions operate in the state of Kerala!



World Compassionate Communities Day Cont'd

Kerala's steps to recognize the importance of palliative care demonstrates the incredible power that local communities have in responding to issues affecting its residents. The Kerala community changed the narrative around dying, created a strong community response, increased the number of people who obtained care and influenced state and national policy.

Today, many Canadian communities are adopting similar compassionate community models. They are offering supports to residents who wish to assist in providing end-of-life care, and by working collaboratively with the health care providers who offer palliative care.

For example, the **Government of Alberta recently launched a webpage, CompassionateAlberta.ca, which offers resources to help individuals with their end-of-life planning.** It recognizes that communities are an equal partner with health care service providers in caring for those who are ill, caregiving or grieving.



In addition, here in the Bow Valley, the palliative care community in the Bow Valley values volunteers who support patients and their families who are coping with death. The impact of these wonderful volunteers is readily seen in our community as these volunteers show compassion by dedicating time to help others in need of support. The Bow Valley palliative care community can introduce individuals to a network of supports and resources to help ensure that everyone facing death can do so in comfort and dignity.

NATIONAL BEREAVEMENT DAY

November 15 marks National Bereavement Day. On this day, Canadians are invited to consider the legacies of those who have died and to share stories about their own journey with grief. Coming together to share experiences helps remind individuals that they are not alone in experiencing grief. It is also an opportunity for communities to learn more about the reality of grief.

In the past, grief was a subject that was rarely spoken about. Because of this, many people do not know how to handle grief, nor do they understand how to help others who are experiencing it. That is changing as our understanding of grief grows.

Grief affects individuals physically as well as psychologically. Have you ever heard the expression to "die of a broken heart"? Well, scientists have discovered that bereaved spouses are more likely to die in the months following the death of their partner. An individual dealing with grief may feel that they have lost a part of themselves. They may develop feelings of depression, anxiety, hopelessness and even suicide. Studies have shown that grief is not merely emotional. It can cause complex physiological changes in our body, such as increased heart rate, higher blood pressure, elevated levels of cortisol as well as changes to our immune system.

With time, most individuals who experience grief are able to continue with their lives. This is made easier when they are surrounded by a supportive community that takes time to listen and validate their feelings. As such, an important way to observe National Bereavement Day is to learn how to support other members of the community who are experiencing grief. [The Canadian Mental Health Association](#) provides excellent resources that can assist individuals coping with grief or a loved one coping with their own. Specifically, the Association suggests asking loved ones what they need, and reminding them that you are there to help. Additionally, offering practical support such as help with cooking, cleaning or even babysitting can go a long way in assisting a loved one coping with loss.

Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley

PCSBV GRIEF SUPPORT

IN-PERSON GRIEF SUPPORT VISITS

Bill Harder, Palliative and Grief Support Navigator, welcomes clients at the Banff Canmore Community Foundation, 214 Banff Avenue, and in Canmore at #202-1080 Railway Avenue (above Sports Experts).

By appointment throughout the week. Onsite in Canmore Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

In Banff on Wednesdays 9:00 am to noon starting November 23, 2022.

Email Bill at bill.harder@pcsbv.ca.



VIRTUAL GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

- Drop-in **[PAUSED]**



Email Bill at bill.harder@pcsbv.ca for any questions.

CANMORE GRIEF SUPPORT WALKING GROUP



Wednesdays | 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

Starting November 2, 2022 during winter (Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb, March) the Canmore Grief Support Walking Group is inside at the Canmore Recreation Centre - 1900-8th Ave.

Meet in the Canmore Recreation Centre lobby.

Fill out Rec. Centre Waiver [here](#).

There is no fee to join this drop-in grief conversation group. It's open to all 18+ who are grieving. We will walk and chat for about 30 minutes and then stop for a guided conversation on the themes of loss and grief.

Please direct any questions to Bill Harder at bill.harder@pcsbv.ca.

PSCBV Presents:

SPECIAL SPEAKERS SERIES
VIRTUAL PRESENTATION



Dr. Samantha Winemaker

Co-host of the
"Waiting Room
Revolution" podcast

Nov 9, 2022
11:00 am to 12:30 pm

[REGISTER](#)

Presenter:

**Dr. Samantha Winemaker BSc., MD,
CCFP(PC), FCFP**

Dr. Winemaker is a graduate of McMaster University Medical School. She has completed residency training in Family Medicine, and fellowship training in Palliative Medicine. Her clinical work is predominately community based, caring for people in their home.

She is an advocate for palliative care reform. She believes strongly that basic principles of palliative care should be the responsibility of all health care providers and integrated into care seamlessly, upstream in the patient's illness journey.

ANNUAL APPEAL: PALLIATIVE CARE SOCIETY OF THE BOW VALLEY

It starts with a discovery...

A lump, or hand tremor, or shortness of breath. Then, a life-changing moment with the doctor. Tears, anxiety, and a bone-deep sadness ensue as the news is broken to family and friends. Minutes become more precious than gold and bucket lists fill to the brim.

The work of the Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley (PCSBV) begins to unfold as we gently step into the spaces of people's lives after a diagnosis, and into the very human work of dying. When the path is uncertain, we walk alongside those in this transformational journey to find a way forward.

At PCSBV, we offer essential programs and services to those in our community experiencing life-altering circumstances, including diagnoses, chronic conditions, and grief. Your generosity has enabled us to provide much-needed support and solace to meet the needs of families.

This past year we continued to build our foundations toward a patient-focused future vision for palliative care support in our community, including our long-term goal for a rural residential hospice home in the Bow Valley. We have brought on our new CEO, Theresa Radwell, who is doing the hard work of building our road map for more comprehensive, partner-inclusive palliative care programming across the region. While the hospice facility remains our biggest milestone, the work of providing essential support services, on behalf of patients and their families, continues.

Together with our valued partners across the region, we ensure individuals and families can navigate the palliative care system smoothly. We have seen an increase in demand for our services to individuals and, more recently, organizations. Bill Harder, our Palliative and Grief Support Navigator, has been bringing the palliative care and end-of-life conversation to new people in new places, including care settings, workplaces, and community gatherings. Bill has begun regular client hours in Banff bringing our grief and loss support services to more individuals across the region. This outreach to individuals closer to their home will continue into the coming year.

There is much more work to do with our community. Every dollar you donate builds on the work we continue to deliver. With your help, the PCSBV can change the dialogue about grief and loss, and create a healthier, stronger, more resilient, and compassionate community in the Bow Valley and beyond.

Here are the ways you can make a donation:

- Click on the link >>> **DONATE**
- Online at www.pcsbv.ca and click on the "Donate" button.
- Send a cheque to:

Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley, PO Box 40113, Canmore Crossing, Canmore, AB, T1W 3H9.

**Donations of \$25 or more will receive a charitable receipt.

For more information contact Kristin Fry, Fund Development at fd@pcsbv.ca or call (403) 707-7633

GIVING TUESDAY

Nov
29

November 29, 2022 is Giving Tuesday. The celebration of Giving Tuesday is a global movement that encourages individuals to express generosity. Whether an individual donates money or simply smiles at someone on the sidewalk, Giving Tuesday celebrates every kind action as meaningful.



Everyone has the power
to make change
in their community.

What does Giving Tuesday mean for the palliative care community? The idea of 'community' is incredibly important to providing high quality palliative care to those living in the Bow Valley. For example, many dedicated volunteers are caregivers who show compassion by providing care to others. In addition, other members of the community demonstrate support for individuals coping with a life-limiting illness and their families by showing them kindness and providing practical assistance with daily tasks.

This year, there are many ways individuals can support the palliative care community on Giving Tuesday. For those who are able, donations to the Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley play an important role in the association's ability to provide resources, care and other forms of support to community members coping with a life-limiting illness and their families. In addition, the Society offers many opportunities for individuals to volunteer, either in direct caregiving or a more general volunteer role. These volunteers are instrumental in ensuring that all members of the community have the tools they need to cope with the difficulty of their own or their loved one's life-limiting illness.

Finally, for those who are unable to give money or time, simple acts of compassion are a great way to participate in Giving Tuesday. Something seemingly as small as saying hello or a short note of thanks to a community member can actually be very significant in lifting an individual's spirits and giving them the strength and support they need to cope with their fear or feelings of loss.

What Can You Give on Giving Tuesday?



Volunteering with PCSBV

Perhaps you've companioned a loved-one as they died. Or maybe you've experienced losses that evoked deep sorrow. Maybe both. This is often the road that leads our volunteers to PCSBV. People come to us with a curiosity and want to learn how to journey with those who are doing the very human work of dying and grieving.

PCSBV client-care volunteers complete a robust training program of in-class and online modules. Topics covered include:

- Role of the Volunteer
- Companioning Grief
- Emotional and Psychological Supports
- Exploring Spirituality
- Physical Issues and Supports
- Effective Listening
- Family Dynamics
- Virtual and Phone Supports
- Self-care
- Case Studies
- Inter-cultural Palliative/grief Awareness
- Quality of Life Concerns
- Advocating for Clients and Families
- Facilitating Community Connections
- Promoting Active Engagement



The training journey invites our learners to conversations that provide a safe place for exploration of one's perspectives on dying, death, loss, sorrow, and transformation. The intent of the training is to prepare our volunteers to step into the lives of individuals who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and/or those who are grieving, to walk alongside as a support.

Volunteers discover the power of presence, of navigating with their clients, and the joys and challenges of loss and grief. It is mucky, often chaotic, and wildly fulfilling work.

Volunteering with PCSBV cont'd.

Volunteers often meet with their clients on a weekly basis, walking, sharing conversation over coffee, laughing together, sharing tears together. Some of our clients are referred months or years prior to actively dying. Some only weeks or days. Some are referred for grief support after a loss.



Our volunteers are trained to go where angels fear to tread, to bear witness to hard stories, and to care for themselves in a way that nurtures their whole being. For this PCSBV is deeply grateful. Without our volunteers we cannot do our work.

Please contact us if you would like more volunteer program information.

We Will Remember



November 11

On Remembrance Day, we acknowledge the courage and sacrifice of those who have served and who continue to serve in our Canadian Armed Services. We thank them for their service and for the freedoms we enjoy today.

RECOMMENDED READING



It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine.

RECOMMENDED VIDEO

Brené Brown on Empathy.

In this short clip, Brené Brown talks about the difference between sympathy and empathy and making connections.



Dates - **Nov. 16 -17**

Upcoming Special Health Awareness Dates

Lung Cancer Awareness Month
November

World Diabetes Day - November 14

Stomach Cancer Awareness Day
- November 30



follow us on social!

Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley

#202-1080 Railway Ave.
Canmore, Alberta T1W 1P4
(403) 707-7111
pcsbv.ca