

# PCSBV Bulletin



#202 - 1080 Railway Ave. | Canmore, AB T1W 1P4

(403) 707-7111 | pcsbv.ca

## Our 2023 Theme: Embrace the elephant in the room

**January... a time to take inventory of where we are, where we want to go, and who will be with us. Resolutions are made. Bold ideas and big plans take shape for how we want to live our life in the coming year.**

Resolutions are intended to give us clarity of mind and focus on what matters or what we want to achieve in our lives. I have heard from people who have received news of a life-threatening illness, that it is the most poignant and clarifying thing that has happened to them - bringing priorities into sharp relief.



So why do we wait to have these thoughts and talk about our goals for living? Why do we wait to focus on what really matters to us and how we want to live our best life possible. So often we hear from people who are at the end of their life, that they wish they had started to 'live' sooner; they wish they had discussed their desires with their loved ones. It can be difficult to think or openly talk about our own mortality. For me, as I grew up, dying was kept quiet, death was acknowledged but not discussed. Different cultures and populations face dying and death in different ways and with varying degrees of comfort.

For 2023, we at the Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley want to invite you into a conversation about the one thing we all truly have in common and how we might live our best lives when we are faced with the inevitable. We want to talk openly and freely, learning from cultures and beliefs where this is common practice.

Death and dying is part of our human experience that many of us are not nearly prepared enough for. Yet, it can be one of the most unifying experiences we may have together as humans. Some of us have already begun to prepare. We have wills, life insurance, organ donor instructions. Fewer have given thought to how we want to be cared for if we are unable to decide for ourselves or at end of life (advanced care planning). Yet, leaving this until faced with a diagnosis can be difficult and, in some cases, too late. It can take away from our ability to focus on living our best possible life. How can we best approach these topics with greater ease or openness? How can we learn to openly embrace the elephant in the room?

We know that from the moment of a diagnosis to the moment of death, and the grief of loved ones that remain, is a difficult and emotional journey. We aren't going to sugar coat it. We will also tell stories of beautiful, transformational journeys. Each of us, and our loved ones, will have different experiences - our job at PCSBV is to provide tools, skills, resources, and support to help navigate the journey and to help you and your loved ones live their best life possible. To talk about the 'big thing' in the room that lives larger for some than others.

**We are here. You are not alone. We are here to help you live your best life possible... over the year ahead, I invite you to embrace your elephant.**

~ Theresa Radwell, CEO

# GRIEF SUPPORT

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT BILL HARDER, PALLIATIVE AND GRIEF SUPPORT NAVIGATOR BY EMAIL AT [BILL.HARDER@PCSBV.CA](mailto:BILL.HARDER@PCSBV.CA)

## IN-PERSON GRIEF SUPPORT VISITS

Canmore: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.  
#202-1080 Railway Avenue (above Sports Experts).

Banff: Wednesdays 9:00 am to noon.  
Banff Canmore Community Foundation, 214 Banff Avenue

Contact: **Book appointment with Bill Harder**

## GRIEF SUPPORT WALKING GROUP IN CANMORE

Wednesdays | 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm  
(January, February, March)

Canmore Recreation Centre - 1900-8th Ave.  
**Meet in the 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.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Blue Monday

Monday, Jan. 16, 2023 | 7 - 8 p.m.  
Elevation Place

Join Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and the Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley for an event to encourage conversation around mental health and to let those who are suffering or grieving know that they are not alone



We will meet for a short gathering ritual, conversation and refreshments, and an opportunity to acknowledge the hard and challenging parts of 2022.

We invite you consider the losses of the last year, death and non-death, and to give communal voice to those losses by hanging a loss-note on our sorrow trees. Our sorrow trees will remain standing inside the front entrance to Elevation Place throughout the week of January 16-21 and you are welcome to stop in at any time to write on a note and hang it on a tree.

For info or to register email: [events@pcsbv.ca](mailto:events@pcsbv.ca) or call 403-707-7111.

## ART THERAPY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Dates: 4 Week program  
January 23 and 30, February 6 and 13  
Time:  
6:30 - 8:00 PM  
Location: PCSBV Boardroom



Art-therapy based grief support group for any anyone 18+ grieving a death loss.

## JANUARY VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Facilitator: Bill Harder

**Jan 17:** Grief Companionship  
- 9:00 AM - Noon | Zoom [Registration Link](#)

**Jan 25:** Role of the Volunteer  
- 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM | Zoom [Registration Link](#)

For more information please contact the Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley via phone at 403 707 7111 or email at [info@pcsbv.ca](mailto:info@pcsbv.ca).



## CARING FOR LOVED-ONES WITH DEMENTIA

- A Palliative Approach

Contrary to public understanding, the palliative approach is appropriate for any incurable condition, including life-limiting organ diseases, cancers, and neurological conditions. As the prevalence of dementia-related diseases increases, the need for dementia-informed palliative care is growing.

The Dementia Society of America provides this broad definition for dementia: "[It] is not a specific disease. It is a descriptive term for a collection of symptoms that can be caused by a number of disorders that affect the brain. People with dementia have significantly impaired intellectual functioning that interferes with normal activities and relationships."

Dementia symptoms go beyond cognitive decline and include issues with balance, tunnel vision, appetite decline, difficulty swallowing, and loss of motor function to state a few.

According to the [Brain Test website](#), it is estimated that **1 in 6 women and 1 in 10 men living past the age of 55 will develop dementia.** "A recent meta-analysis reported that the global prevalence of dementia is somewhere between 5 and 7 percent within people aged 60 or over. By the age of 85 years and older, between 25 and 50 percent of people display symptoms of dementia, more specifically Alzheimer's."

With dementia cases on the rise the need for well-developed palliative care supports is crucial for patients, their families, and our whole communities. Following are a few suggestions for caregivers as well as links for further information.

**As a generality, the following nurture quality of life those with dementia:**

- **Establish a daily routine**
- **Anticipate that tasks may take longer than they used to**
- **Allow the person with dementia to do as much as possible with the least amount of assistance**
- **Provide some, but not too many choices every day**
- **People with dementia best understand clear, one-step communication**
- **Get the person's attention - limit distractions and noise**
- **Listen with your ears, eyes, and heart**
- **When the going gets tough, distract and redirect**
- **Be gentle and respectful. Tell the person what you are going to do, step by step**

While not a comprehensive list, this provides some insight into the role of the palliative support caregiver for individuals experiencing the symptoms of dementia. In the Bow Valley, dementia patients and their families are supported by the excellent work of Alberta Home Care as well as community resources such as Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), Meals on Wheels, and of course, our own PCSBV companion volunteers.



### A Story of Support for "Joan"

*"The palliative approach to care takes many forms. From symptom management and pain control to emotional/social supports, palliative care meets us where we are at. For one couple finding their way through the wilderness of dementia, palliative care comes in the form of cross-country skiing. Joan (name has been changed) has been an avid skier through her adult life. This did not change after a diagnosis of dementia. It did mean, however, that some special supports needed to be added.*

*This is when trained PCSBV palliative care volunteers stepped forward. A group of volunteers who happen to be accomplished skiers offered to take turns skiing with Joan. This provides support on numerous levels. Joan has opportunity for brain-stimulating exercise and social engagement, and Joan's spouse/caregiver has opportunity for self-care and life chores. As her disease progresses, these volunteers can adjust their interaction to meet Joan's changing needs. A win for all involved, fresh air, care, and the nurturing of quality of life."*

# SUPPORT PCSBV

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT KRISTIN FRY, FUND DEVELOPMENT BY EMAIL AT [FD@PCSBV.CA](mailto:FD@PCSBV.CA) OR CALL (403) 707-7633

The Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley offers essential community support services to those in our community experiencing life-altering changes, including terminal diagnoses, life-limiting illness, and grief through our client-care volunteer program.

Together with supporters like you we can achieve our goals for ongoing palliative care services and programs delivered to communities, individuals and families in the Bow Valley.

**PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TODAY TO SUPPORT PCSBV RAISING FUNDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM COSTS SUCH AS:**

- TRAINING PROGRAM
- VOLUNTEER RESOURCES
- CLIENT SUPPORT RESOURCES
- AND OTHER CLIENT-CARE VOLUNTEER EXPENSES

**Giving \$42 per month/\$500 per year supports the work of a client-care volunteer who make a difference in client's lives everyday.**

**When a client contacts us, we can support them on their journey with highly-skilled, trained and equipped client-care volunteers who are ready to serve.**

## Options to donate

- **General Donations** are used for programs currently with the greatest need of your financial support.
- **Tributes** honour a family member, friend, or loved one.
- **Building** donations support creating a residential hospice home accessible to the Bow Valley community.
- **Monthly donations** will ensure constant support throughout the years.

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

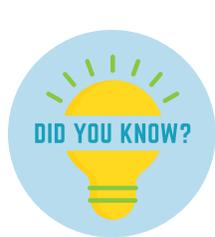


## Ways To Donate...

- Click on the link >>>
- Online at [www.pcsbv.ca](http://www.pcsbv.ca) and click on the "Donate" button.
- Send a cheque to:

**DONATE**

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

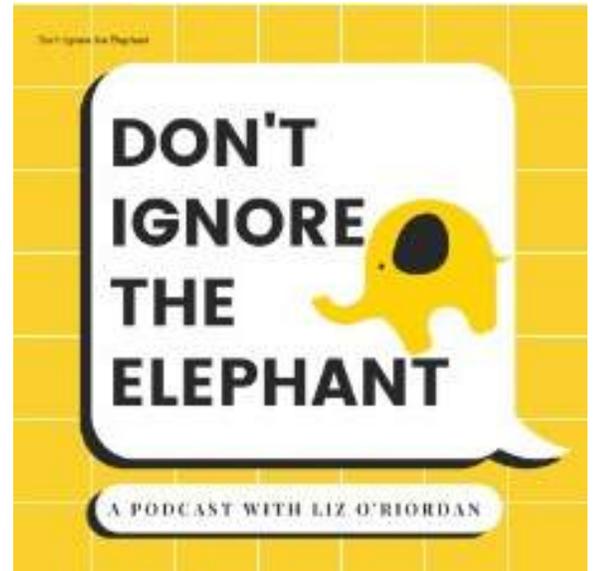


## RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

### **Don't Ignore the Elephant**

Kathryn Mannix: What happens when we die?

(double click **HERE** to listen.)



Did you know there is a special day to acknowledge hugging? Any day is a good day for hugging, but officially, January 21 is established as National Hugging Day.

It was created in 1986 and occurs in January because the winter season tends to be the time of year when people experience emotional lows.

### **Benefits of Hugs**

Think for a moment about the last time you hugged someone and then think about how long it lasted. Was it about 3 seconds? According to studies, the average hug lasts just a few seconds. It is incredible to consider, but that is all it takes. 3 seconds to improve mental, physical, and spiritual health.

Hugs boost the feel-good hormones, such as dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin. According to research, a longer hug of 10 seconds can help the body fight infection and depression. Moreover, a hug of 20 seconds can help reduce stress and blood pressure. A good hug also creates the feeling of belonging, feeling cared for and safe which can be beneficial in reducing feelings of loneliness.

### **How to Get More Hugs**

A family therapist, Virginia Satir once said, "We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth."

So, for optimum health benefits, how can we add more hugs into our daily lives?

- Find people or place that give hugs. (Find a 'hug buddy,' friends, family members, co-workers, support groups, etc.)
- Be of service in places where people need hugs. (Volunteer where connection is needed, spend time with people who are isolated, etc.)
- Communicate your desire for hugs. (Step into vulnerability and ask for a hug. Can you say, "I need a hug?" or "Can I have a hug instead of a handshake?")
- Become a hugger. (Be the first person to offer a hug as a greeting or for comfort.)
- Hug your pet. (Although it is not a human connection, hugs from pets offer unconditional love and comfort.)

Now, go get that hug. Embrace the health benefits and embrace your loved-ones!



Shout out to Canmore's Frankie D's Donuts for supporting us last month with their "Love-filled Giveback". Thank you to all who supported this fundraiser.

Big Thank you to all of our donors who supported our annual appeal!

## UPCOMING SPECIAL AWARENESS DATES

January 16: Blue Monday  
 January 22: Chinese New Year  
 March: PCSBV Art Therapy Teen Grief Support Group