

# PCSBV Bulletin



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

(403) 707-7111 | pcsbv.ca

## These are "HEART STONES"...

**Scattered thoughtfully around the PCSBV office are stones of all sizes that have been formed by nature - water, pressure, friction - into the shape of hearts. A long-time PCSBV volunteer seeks these out on her travels and collects them to bring back to the PCSBV as small tokens of love and care that can be shared. Bill Harder and his client-care volunteers can give one of these "heart stones" to a client as a reminder - a literal touchstone - to help focus on love and life.**

**Grasping one of these in hand, stroking the smoothed, rounded edges, and connecting with a part of the earth, can help to ground and remind someone of the love and care surrounding them.**

February is "heart" month, when we can all focus on our cardiovascular health. It is also the month where "love" abounds with Valentine's Day drawing our minds to those with whom we share our life, love and laughter. February can be a difficult time for those living with a life-limiting illness or those around them. How can we think about enjoying love when faced with death and the silent elephant is crowding the room? How can we embrace the elephant, and through this, embrace the love that surrounds us?

Holding love in our hands and in our heart when our mind may be occupied with questions and concerns isn't easy. But a "heart stone" found and given out may remind us that we are loved and give us strength. By openly acknowledging the elephant is there, can we open our heart and mind to a new way of living? Can we invite fullness, love, and playfulness into our day-to-day, no matter how many of those still remain?



Embracing the elephant means accepting it and walking life with it. While receiving palliative care, it is still possible to maintain normalcy in life by:

- Following a routine
- Living in the present moment
- Doing things you love
- Taking care of your mental and physical health
- Building/repairing meaningful connections
- Setting healthy boundaries with yourself

Dance. Live life as fully as possible. Feel more positive. Enjoy each day. Keep doing the things you love for longer.

# 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)

## GRIEF SUPPORT VISITS (IN-PERSON)

Canmore: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.  
PCSBV Office - #202-1080 Railway Ave.  
(Above Sports Experts)

Banff: Wednesdays 9:00 am to noon.  
Banff Canmore Community Foundation - 214 Banff Ave.

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

## PCSBV VOLUNTEER TRAINING

### Feb 21: Grief Companionship

(Facilitator: Bill Harder)

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Zoom

[Registration Link](#)

### Mar 17: Virtual and Phone Supports

(Facilitator: Bill Harder)

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Hybrid - Boardroom/Zoom

[Registration Link](#)

### Mar 18: Exploring Spirituality

(Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Richard LeSueur)

9:30 AM - Noon

Hybrid - Boardroom/Zoom

[Registration Link](#)

### Mar 18: Effective Listening

(Facilitator: Dr. Tiffany Kriz)

1:00 - 4:00 PM

Hybrid - Boardroom/Zoom

[Registration Link](#)

[Volunteer - Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley \(pcsbv.ca\)](#)

Follow the link to the volunteer training calendar.

## ART THERAPY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Upcoming 4 week program

March 2, 9, 16, 30

Art-therapy based grief support group  
for teenagers grieving a death or loss.

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).**



## How Art Therapy is Helping with Grief

Art Therapy had been part of the client care program with the Palliative Care Society of the Bow Valley since 2021. If you are not familiar with art therapy, Kristin Slagorsky, a PCSBV Art Therapy program facilitator and practicum student, explains it as this,

“Art Therapy is the exploration and use of an experiential creative process to help integrate mind, body, heart, and spirit. It is a form of self-expression that communicates through the language of colour, shape, symbol, metaphor, and instinct.”

Kristin has noticed that often, people have trouble viewing themselves as creative. “One of the main principles of art therapy is that we are all born creative, and that tapping into our creativity promotes wellness and connection. From this perspective, creativity is one of the hallmarks of our species, a birthright that can be reclaimed.”

Kristin, along with Bill Harder, our Palliative and Grief Support Navigator, have been facilitating a Grief Support Art Therapy Group since January. It is a small group of 10 people who meet weekly for four weeks to use art therapy to process feelings of grief and loss. One of our client care volunteers, Lee Rinne, is both a volunteer with a client and a participant in the sessions. Once she joined the class, she was not sure what to expect. After attending the first session, she said she already found comfort, and connection with the group.

The group was given paper, coloured pens, and an opportunity to freely draw whatever came to mind when they reflected on their feelings of loss and grief. Each person had the chance to share their drawing with other participants in the group. Each class has a different creative theme, but this was the first one.



“My father died during Covid,” Lee says, “He lived in another province, and we were not able to be with him in his last days. At the time, we could not gather for a celebration of life. I feel incomplete. Without closure, I feel a big hole inside me. It was traumatic and I need to reconcile with his loneliness and dying alone and my feelings about it.”

Lee says the group is a safe space for her where she is openly sharing and getting present to the grief in the room. “There’s common ground. I had the chance to share my experience, and I felt like there was a pressure valve that was being opened and so pressure was relieved. I felt like closure was possible, given the generous listening in the room.”

Grief is very personal. Each of us needs to find our own way to reconcile feelings and even find a sense of closure. Having a means to be able to do that with a group of supportive individuals can help with processing and healing. Lee says, I am learning to colour outside the lines in terms of my grief. With the different art mediums, I am learning to share and move through it in a new way, which is allowing me to better express my grief.”

The next Art Therapy program is Art-therapy based grief support group for teenagers grieving a death or loss. It is a 4-week program on March 2, 9, 16, 30.

For more information on the programs, 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).



# 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.

Thanks to generous donors, PCSBV provides client care services without a fee.



## 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 >>> [DONATE](#)
- Online at [www.pcsbv.ca](http://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.**

# Spirituality in Palliative Care



It was a few years ago, she shook my hand, looked in my eyes and started to say something that was suddenly swallowed by emotion. Straining to regain her composure, she whispered to me, "My cancer has come back." I glanced over to her husband and noticed lines of wet tears running down his cheeks. I opened my arms to them and the three of us embraced and stood there for a moment. There were no words to easily soothe the fear and sadness being shared. Of course, we were also aware that there were other people behind, in line, wanting to proceed out of the church, who did not likely realize all that was transpiring ahead of them.

Why were they in church that day? Does there need to be an answer? When a circumstance suddenly crosses our path, dislodging everything in life, a person might reach out to some imagined, greater, loving power and plead for intervention.

Teilhard de Chardin once wrote, "We are not so much human beings on a spiritual journey, we are spiritual beings on the human journey." Suggesting spirituality is part of our DNA. A natural capacity that one can touch by pausing, turning inward, reaching down into the well of our soulfulness, from which, to our surprise, a knowing can arise, "We meet again."

The spiritual journey has taken many forms over 10's of 1000's of years, in the human quest for meaning, for ultimate connection and sacred assurance. If one side of the coin of human need has been carved with circumstances of illness, fear, suffering, loss, death and the cry of love, then the other side has been carved by the desperate hope to restore life as it was, where divine intervention has often been sought to make all things whole again.

In the program run by Bill Harder, to train volunteers to serve with the PCSBV, one of the modules is dedicated to the discussion of spirituality. With many ways to express spirituality it becomes important to prepare how one might best respond if spirituality were to arise in a conversation with a person living with a life-limiting illness. For two years it has been my privilege to facilitate this module.

"Spirituality" can be an activating word today; can conjure negative associations, even a repulsive reaction. The Christian faith, for example, has much to answer to, for 1700 years of playing chaplain to empire. Nevertheless, one might still choose to draw upon the Christian prayerful experience and there find a source of inner peace, hope and personal inspiration. It can be a great comfort. In a sense, spirituality, in all its forms, lives on.

My hunch is that the couple who came to church that day, felt the same. They came in their need. They held each other. They prayed.

Richard LeSueur

*Thank you to  
Rev. Richard LeSueur for  
his contribution to our  
monthly newsletter.*



## Blue Monday Event Recap



The Blue Monday event had a wonderful turnout of community. About 30 people wandered through, and the trees were virtually covered with notes, like trees leafing out in spring! 173 "loss notes" were hung on the trees throughout the week.

This event provided the community with a unique opportunity for communal mourning of uncountable losses in the last year. Notes on the grief trees reference family death losses, emotional and mental struggles, gratitude, and hopes for the coming year. Rarely do we see such a public outpouring of loss, grief, and as are offered through these leaves of loss.- **Bill Harder, Palliative Care of the Bow Valley.**

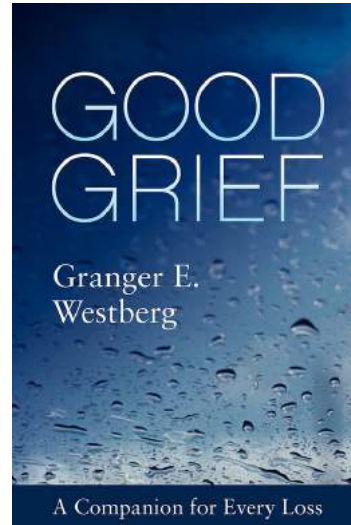
We are happy to have been able to offer this event in collaboration with the Palliative Care Society. It's almost as if there is a taboo in our society around talking about grief, loss, and mental health. We all go through these things and so we felt it was important to give people a space to connect and be able to share their stories. The event was really moving, and it's been fascinating to watch the trees fill up with little notes since the event. Reading the notes on the trees makes me realize that we are all carrying a lot; and it's important to check in on our friends and family and to look out for one another.  
- **Molly Matheson, Town of Canmore**



## READING RESOURCE

### Good Grief: A Companion for Every Loss

by Granger E Westberg (Author)



"Good Grief offers valuable insights on the emotional and physical responses persons may experience during the natural process of grieving something as small as a change in plans to something as traumatic and final as death. Reflection questions sprinkled throughout the book help readers explore their own experience with each stage of the grieving process."

## ARTICLE OF INTEREST

### I Have Just Months To Live. Instead Of Making A Bucket List, Here's What I'm Doing Before I Go.

"When I was diagnosed... the thought of leaving the people I loved left me heartbroken, but I chose to confront my prognosis honestly and openly."



## UPCOMING SPECIAL AWARENESS DATES

Heart Month  
World Cancer Day - February 4  
Valentine's Day - February 14  
Family Day - February 20



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