



BEREAVEMENT
toolkit

by the CISSS Montérégie-Centre



Québec 



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BEREAVEMENT *toolkit*



All of us from your care team would like to extend our most sincere condolences during this time of loss.

This toolkit is for your support and provides information on bereavement, the resources available and a link to the [guide for steps to take following a death](#).

WHAT IS *grief?*

Grief is described as

"... a healthy response and a state of suffering and sadness following the death of a loved one."

– Jean Monbourquette

Grief is a natural process. Some writers divide grief into steps or phases. In reality, there is no single way to experience grief. It is a personal journey. Grief is often compared to a rollercoaster in which difficult and happy moments can coexist. The days to come will not be the same without the physical presence of the deceased. Changes happen day to day and you must find a way to carry on with life despite the pain.

You must not imagine or believe that grief has a time limit. Like a wound, it becomes less painful over time, but can still be present. Life events can provoke memories of the deceased, for example, a birthday, a song, a meeting, a scent, etc. Even after several years, emotions can be revived by these memories.

You are the best person for identifying your needs concerning grief and for choosing the time to consult support resources.

WHAT *reactions* to expect during bereavement?

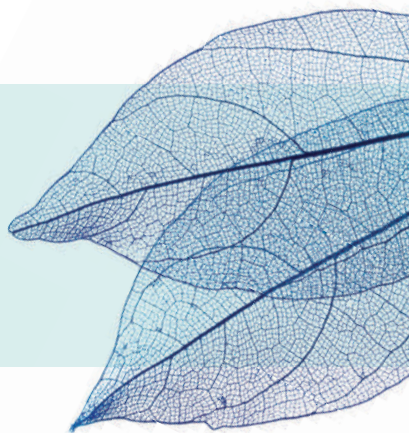
Everyone experiences grief in their own way, according to their personality and in their own time. The intensity of reactions varies depending on the circumstances surrounding the death and your relationship with the deceased. It can be difficult to predict and understand your reactions in the face of loss. Reactions to grief can take various forms.

Here are some examples:

RÉACTIONS	EXEMPLES
emotional	pain • anger • helplessness rebelliousness • guilt
physical	extreme fatigue • pain • stress loss of appetite • difficulty sleeping
social	isolation • withdrawal • loss of interest fear of being alone
spiritual	search for meaning • sens of hopelessness awareness of one's own mortality

Please note

If your grief reactions become intense and persistent and are causing you distress, we encourage you to contact [support resources](#).



WHAT CAN I DO to *work through* my grief?

Taking action can ease the way through grief. The idea is to take some time to think about yourself and the unique relationship you experienced with the deceased. Some actions that can help with healing include drawing on your strengths, taking care of yourself, expressing how you feel and creating rituals.

Some examples:

Draw on your strengths



- Identify actions that have helped you cope with difficult moments in your life.
- Among actions that help, choose ones that can be implemented immediately.
- Do something every day that gives you joy.
- Surround yourself with people who make you feel good.
- Have the courage to do something different.

Look after yourself



- Be kind to yourself.
- Allow yourself to experience your pain.
- Establish a new daily routine to follow.
- Allow yourself time to rest.
- Take deep breaths when feeling intense emotions.
- Practice cardiac coherence.
- Take walks in nature.
- Consult support resources.
- If you have to make important decisions, take your time.

Express yourself



- Tells stories about special times with the deceased.
- Talk about how the person made you feel (emotional legacy).
- Pay respect to the deceased by telling their story.
- Share what you are experiencing with someone (life path, end of life, death, etc.).
- Draw, sing, paint, compose.
- Participate in a grief support group.
- Write a letter to the deceased expressing your regrets and apologies.
- Prepare a keepsake box with objects belonging to the deceased.
- Pay forward (association, volunteering, loved ones).
- Identify a person or resource to contact in case of emergency.

Create rituals



- View photographs/videos with others who knew the deceased.
- Participate in the funeral, read a tribute or testimonial.
- Visit the cemetery or columbarium.
- Pray or meditate.
- Attend a memorial ceremony.
- Close your eyes and say goodbye again (visualisation).
- Organize a special activity that the deceased would have enjoyed.
- Keep a commemorative corner at home (candles, photos).
- Mark the transition with concrete action (travel, plant a tree).
- Include children and youth in rituals.

Please note

Consuming alcohol, drugs, medication and any other kind of addictive substance can affect grief negatively. If you need to, contact a [certified addiction resource](#).

WHAT ARE bereavement support *resources?*

Your health and well being is important. Support reduces the impact of grief on daily life. Reach out to your loved ones for support. You can also consult resources specializing in support for the bereaved. We encourage you to be in touch with them if you feel the need.

COMMUNITY AND GROUP BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES

The following is a list of the main community and group bereavement resources that can connect you to their services and those in your region:



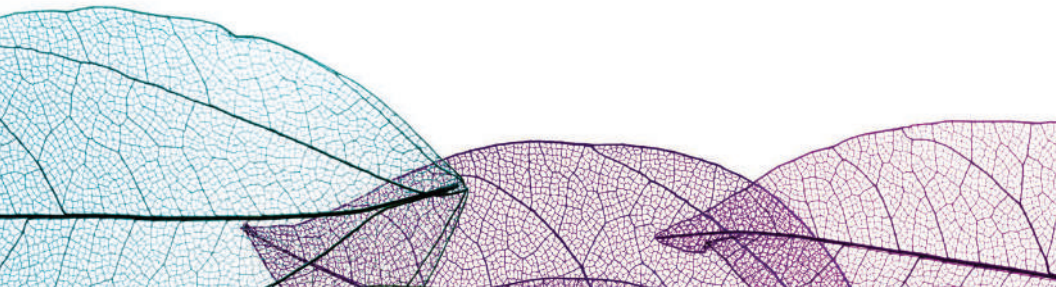
J'accompagne - in French only
Le bottin (by region and service)
jaccompagne.ca/ressources



Fondation Monbourquette - English option
fondationmonbourquette.com/ressources-anglais
514 894-8981



Maison Source bleue - French only
maisonsourcebleue.ca
450 641-3165





Maison Victor-Gadbois - French only
maisonvictor-gadbois.com
450 467-1710



Ordre des psychologues du Québec
 English option
ordrepsy.qc.ca
1 800 561-1223



Fédération des coopératives
 funéraires du Québec - English option
fcfq.coop
1 891 566-6303

HELP LINES

Help lines are organizations with personnel trained in counselling. They are free, anonymous, confidential and accessible to everyone. The main bereavement help lines are:

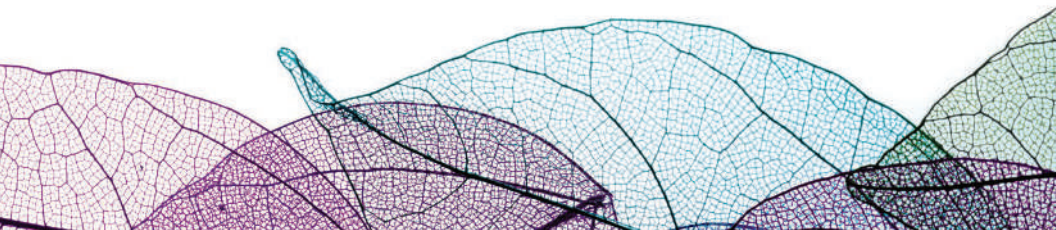
1 888 Le deuil **1 888 533-3845**

Tel-Aide **514 935-1101**

Tel-Aînés **514 353-2463**

Fondation PalliAmi
 (18 ans et +) **514 413-8777**

Suicide.ca **1 866 APPELLE (1 866 277-3553)**
Texto 1 855-957-5353



LECTURES, FILMS, SERIES AND PROGRAMS ON BEREAVEMENT

Please find below suggestions for lectures, films, series and programs about bereavement provided by the following organizations:

- **Biblio-Santé** offers a booklet on bereavement. It is updated annually by the *Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec*. The booklet includes: overcoming grief, losing a child, bereavement experienced by children and adolescents and bereavement following a suicide.

Visit the website: bibliosante.ca - English option

- **[Guide for bereavement during a pandemic](#)** was created by *Formations Monbourquette sur le deuil de l'Université de Montréal*. It describes the process of grief and provides concrete ways and symbolic acts to deal with grief.

Consult the website: praxis.umontreal.ca

(see fondationmonbourquette.com/ressources-anglais)

- **Infodeuil.ca** describes grief in words and images. The website provides the essentials on bereavement, rituals, what comes next and resources.

Consult the website: infodeuil.ca - in French only

STEPS TO TAKE FOLLOWING A DEATH

The procedures to follow after the death of a loved one are provided in detail in the guide [What to do in the event of death](#). This guide is revised yearly by the Quebec government.

Visit the website at:

quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/death

It contains:

- steps to take to prepare for a death;
- first steps to take following a death;
- steps to take before settling a succession;
- financial assistance granted to survivors;
- liquidation of the succession and release of liquidator;
- steps to take relating to the deceased's situation before death;
- government departments and bodies to be informed of the date of death.



HOW TO ACCOMPANY a *child* or *youth* through bereavement?

[Grief](#) does not recognize age, however, the idea of death changes as we grow up. For the sake of protecting them, some adults believe that it is better not to talk about death with children.

In fact, by talking about death, you allow them to:

- express their feelings;
- ask questions;
- feel included;
- feel safe and reassured;
- feel protected.

Ask the child or youth about their understanding of the events and death and you will then have a starting point for providing support. A bereaving child or youth may need time before understanding that their emotions are less intense. It is also possible that they need time before being able to express what they are experiencing and it could even take several years. Those around must remain ready and open for discussion.

Please note

As a parent or close friend or relative, you understand the child or youth. It is important to remain sensitive to reactions to grief (nightmares, problems with behaviour, isolation at school, etc.). If the [reactions to grief](#) become intense and persistent and are causing distress, we encourage you to contact one of the [support resources](#) for children, youth and parents.

Listen



- Pay attention to the reactions of the child or youth.
 - Encourage them to talk about their feelings and share their pain with family and friends.
 - Invite them to ask questions now and later.
 - Make yourself available for talking about it.
-

Talk



- Use simple words.
 - Say the word death when talking about the deceased.
 - Avoid secrets and things not said (children and youth feel your pain).
 - Accompany them to say *good-bye* to the loved one.
 - Reflect their strengths during the most difficult periods.
-

Answer questions



- Answer their questions truthfully.
 - Announce the death while talking about the events that will follow.
 - Explain changes to their daily life.
 - Seeing and touching the body of the deceased will help them understand death.
-

Have them participate in rituals



- Include them in preparing for rituals
 - Prepare artwork, drawings, words, songs, performances, dedications, etc.
 - Allow them to attend rituals.
 - Create rituals together.
-

Comfort them



- Hold them in your arms and be affectionate.
- Cry together.
- Help them find an object of comfort that reminds them of the deceased
- Look at a book, film, series or program that talks about grief.
- If needed, offer them the option of support with a peer group or a healthcare provider.

BEREAVEMENT COMMUNITY AND GROUP RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PARENTS

The following is a list of the main bereavement community and group resources for children, youth and parents that will connect you to their services or those in your region:



Deuil-Jeunesse - French only

deuil-jeunesse.com

1 855 889-3666



La Maison des Petits Tournesols (enfants, adolescents et parents) - French only

lamaisondespetittournesols.com

450 332-4862



Le Phare, Enfants et Familles - English option

phare-lighthouse.com

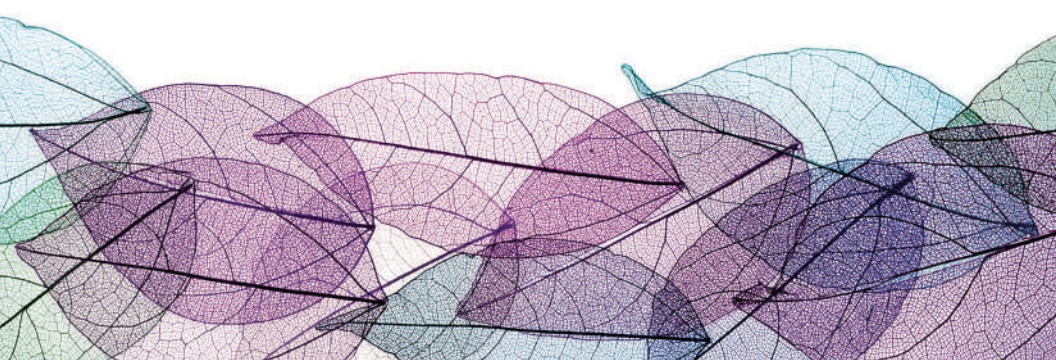
514 954-4848



Maison Victor-Gadbois
(enfants et adultes) - French only

maisonvictor-gadbois.com

450 467-1710



HELP LINES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PARENTS

Help lines are organizations that provide personnel trained in counselling. They are free, anonymous, confidential and accessible to everyone. The main bereavement help lines for children, youth and parents are:

Deuil Jeunesse	1 855 889-3666
Tel-Jeunes	1 800 263-2266
Ligne Parents	1 800 361-5085
Suicide Action Montréal	1 866 277-3553

LECTURES, FILMS, SERIES AND PROGRAMS ON BEREAVEMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Please find below suggestions for lectures, films, series and programs for children and youth about bereavement provided by the following organizations:

- **Biblio-Santé** offers a booklet on bereavement. It is updated annually by the *Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec*. The booklet includes: overcoming grief, losing a child, bereavement experienced by children and adolescents and bereavement following a suicide.

Visit the website: bibliosante.ca - English option

- **KidsGrief.ca** is part of the free internet site, Canadian Virtual Hospice. It offers advice on understanding grief in children, finding the right moment for talking and how to talk about end of life and dying and supporting children through grief.

Consult the website at: kidsgrief.ca

- **Deuil-Jeunesse** has some thirty publications on bereavement and children and youth and how to support them. These publications include: guides, articles, books, memoires, essays, posts and videos.

Visit the website: deuil-jeunesse.com

HOW TO FIND bereavement *support services* at the CISSS MONTÉRÉGIE-CENTRE?

What you are experiencing could require support from a healthcare professional. Contact **Info-Social** at 8-1-1.

Contact your local **CLSC psychosocial services** by telephone or by visiting in person.

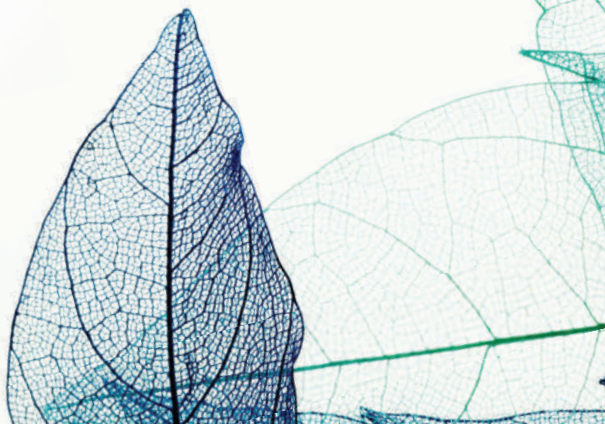
CLSC de Henryville <i>No services offered</i>	Consult the Vallée- des-Forts CLSC
CLSC de la rue Champlain (<i>for ages 12-25</i>) 185, rue Champlain Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (Québec) J3B 6V5	450 358-2572 ext. 3083
CLSC de la Vallée-des-Forts 978, boulevard du Séminaire Nord Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (Québec) J3A 1E5	450 358-2572 ext. 4510
CLSC de Saint-Césaire <i>No services offered</i>	Consult the Vallée- des-Forts CLSC
CLSC du Richelieu 300, chemin de Marieville Richelieu (Québec) J3L 3V8	450 658-7561 ext. 4510
CLSC Saint-Hubert 6800, boulevard Cousineau Saint-Hubert (Québec) J3Y 8Z4	450 443-7400 ext. 7318
CLSC Samuel-de-Champlain 5811, boulevard Taschereau, bureau 100 Brossard (Québec) J4Z 1A5	450 445-4452 ext. 2666

Meet with your doctor for a referral to the **mental health access desk** to receive services adapted to your situation and location.

“Bereavement opens a path that life without hardship does not experience. Shadow takes the place of light, the fear of emptiness fades away and new possibilities open a path toward the unthinkable. The mourner finds a vitality within that he believed was lost when losing the other, he discovers a different self, not at the end of the bereavement, but after continuous work in which the outcome will be both liberating and promising.”



– Johanne de Montigny



*Centre intégré
de santé et de
services sociaux de
la Montérégie-Centre*

Québec



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