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Grief has never been more prevalent in Canadian classrooms

NEW resource to support teachers and their grieving students

October 22, 2020 – In response to a national lack of supports for Canada’s one million educators, Canadian Virtual Hospice is adding a new resource to its KidsGrief.ca online platform: **Kids Grief for Educators**.

With funding from CIRA's Community Investment Program, **Kids Grief for Educators** is a series of four interactive learning modules for educators, child care workers, and school administrators to enhance their ability to recognize and respond to students' grief.

Grieving children are among society’s most vulnerable members. While children often spend more waking hours with educators than they do with their parents, few teachers receive training to recognize and support children’s grief.

“I was at a complete loss as to what I should say or do to support them. I felt helpless”. – Teacher

Teachers and administrators can access Kids Grief for Educators for free, online, anytime, anywhere.

The team behind this resource is internationally recognized kids' grief expert Andrea Warnick, joined by Canadian grief specialists, and informed by teachers and families with lived experience.

These new modules complement parent resources already available on KidsGrief.ca, providing a consistent, supportive approach for grieving kids at home, in childcare, or school.



[\[https://vimeo.com/469803603\]](https://vimeo.com/469803603)

The content is applicable to community settings like sports teams, church groups and kids' clubs. Coaches, activity leaders, and community club organizers will discover valuable information they can use to support grieving children in their programs.

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Interviews

- Jenny Doull, Family advisor, daughter Phoebe died of cancer
- Sue Massaad, Principal, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Andrea Warnick, RN, MA, Psychotherapist, Kids Grief Expert
- Shelly Cory, Executive Director, Canadian Virtual Hospice

Quotes

“Educators are dedicated to the well-being of their students. They have told us that they don’t feel confident supporting children who are grieving before and after a death. Kids Grief for Educators provides age appropriate guidance for

-Shelly Cory, Executive Director, Canadian Virtual Hospice

"CIRA is proud to support innovative digital literacy projects like the Kids Grief for Educators program that will make much-needed resources more accessible online. The global pandemic is forcing kids to spend more time on the internet than ever before, so it's important that we provide those who work with youth the materials they need to support youngsters struggling with grief. Leading discussions on difficult topics like death is challenging at the best of times. Given our increasingly online world, bringing a human touch to these conversations is all the more difficult. But with tailored resources in hand, we're optimistic that teachers and community leaders can provide comfort and understanding to grieving kids across Canada."

-David Fowler, vice president, marketing and communications at CIRA.

"Experiencing the terminal illness or death of a family member is one of the most powerful disruptions in all aspects of a child or youth's emotional existence. Receiving compassionate and well-informed grief support goes a long way towards helping kids of all ages integrate such an experience in a healthy way. With children spending the majority of their waking hours at school it is imperative that educators and administrators feel well equipped to support students when tragedy strikes, but unfortunately that is rarely the case. Through KidsGrief for Educators schools and child care centres will finally have easy access to well-informed guidance on how to support students who are grieving the dying or death of someone in their life."

-Andrea Warnick, RN, MA, Psychotherapist, Kids Grief Expert

For more information or to arrange an interview:

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Background

Visit KidsGrief.ca to:

- Increase confidence in supporting students experiencing a serious illness, dying, or death in their life
- Understand how grief impacts students' behaviour and learning

- Discover activities to use in the classroom to help foster grief literacy

KidsGrief.ca launched in 2017, building on MyGrief.ca, an online resource for grieving adults launched by the Canadian Virtual Hospice. MyGrief.ca has received innovation awards from the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement and Digital Health Canada.

Quotes from the learning modules

"I was glad Mr. Kim had talks about dying in class. It helped when my grandfather did die. My parents don't like to talk about hard things so I think it would have been worse for me". – Student

"It was a very sad and tearful day for my students and I when we attended the funeral, but Shay's parents were so grateful that we did go". – Teacher

"Nobody knew what to say when Mr. Galway announced that Minnie was close to dying. The room was silent, and it stayed like that almost all morning". – Highschool Student

About Canadian Virtual Hospice

Canadian Virtual Hospice is the most comprehensive online source of information on advanced illness, palliative care, and grief in the world. It is an award-winning charitable organization that serves the information and support needs of more than 2.4 million people each year who are living with illness, family members and friends, healthcare providers, researchers and educators.

Its other virtual platforms include MyGrief.ca, KidsGrief.ca, LivingMyCulture.ca, LivingOutLoud.Life, MyGriefToolbox.ca and Methadone4Pain.ca.

About CIRA's Community Investment Program

CIRA is building a trusted internet for Canadians through the Community Investment Program by funding charities, not-for-profits and research institutions that are helping improve Canada's internet. CIRA is best known for our role managing the .CA domain on behalf of all Canadians. While this remains CIRA's primary mandate, as a member-based not-for-profit ourselves, CIRA has a much broader goal to strengthen Canada's internet. The Community Investment Program funds projects in infrastructure, digital literacy, cybersecurity and community leadership. Every .CA domain name registered or renewed contributes to this program. To date, CIRA has contributed \$7.95

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