Let’s make change happen  Agir pour innover

MyGrief.ca & Ask a Professional

Canadian Virtual Hospice
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What is a Virtual Hospice?

› Most comprehensive online knowledge management centre in the world on palliative, end-of-life care, loss and grief. (Fassbender, 2015)

- Patient/family teaching tools
- Interactive supports
- Professional tools for practice

2016

1.6 million visitors
The Problem

There is a patchwork of palliative care services and support across Canada.
MyGrief.ca

Because losing someone is hard...

MyGrief.ca helps you understand and work through your grief.

- Confidential and free
- Access in the privacy of your own home
- Developed by families and grief experts
- Stories from people who have “been there”
- A resource for professionals
Unique in the world

› Learning modules
› Combines evidence-informed content and diverse personal narratives
› Internet access only barrier to support
› Gives people a language for discussing issues
› Complements existing services
Results and impact

• 1,000+ active users in last 30 days
• 100% very positive; exceeded expectations
• 89% users would share with family, health providers
• Additional modules requested
• Used in bereavement support groups
• Trains health care providers and volunteers
• University of Maryland incorporating in Masters course

“I felt that I was making peace with my entire life... A magnificent life review with new eyes. “

“It is so easy to use and it is a tremendous gift for those heartbreaking times we all go through.”

“I revisited very difficult memories with an open heart.”

“I don't feel so alone in my journey.”
Assets

› Personal narratives
› Family advisors; expert team
› Dr. Robert Neimeyer
› Addresses common barriers
› Anonymity
› Only access requirement is Internet and login
› Positioned for growth
› Health care providers enthusiastic

Barriers

› Each bereavement is unique; one size doesn’t fit all
› Log in
› Raising awareness on national scale
› Internet access in rural and remote areas
Sustainability and Spread

› Business plan for US market
  • Exploring subscription agreements with US health systems, universities

› Seeking funding for new modules:
  • Health provider grief
  • Kids grief
  • Teen grief
  • Perinatal loss
  • Spousal loss
  • Loss of a child
The Innovation: Ask a Professional

› Equal online access to interdisciplinary team of health experts who respond to questions.
› Evidence-informed responses in 3 business days; links to local services
› Objective: inform, empower rather than direct
› Listen, acknowledge, provide information as appropriate, encourage next steps
  o Lay public – support discussions with direct health care team
  o Health care providers - provide general overview (references as appropriate), and options for the clinical context at hand
Considerations in Formulating Replies

**Family/friends** – often seeking prognosis and what to expect

- Respect privacy
- Redirect to site content

**Health providers** – nurses, pharmacists often hoping to influence physician’s current management

- Assume the response will be provided to others
- Respectful, professional, acknowledging various approaches
Story of Impact

› My dad has been diagnosed with a very aggressive cancer. My mom is falling apart. What do I do?

One week later...

› My dad died yesterday. I want to speak at the funeral. Do people speak at funerals? What do I say?
Results and Impact

2467 questions answered to date

› Survey sent with each question:
  • 87% respondents very satisfied with responses received
  • 93% agree or strongly agree that the response is knowledgeable and addressed issues
  • 74% strongly agreed that they feel more knowledgeable as a result
  • 81% planned to share the response with others
**Assets**

- Internet is only access requirement
- Excellent virtual interdisciplinary health team
- Anonymity
- Vast site content and AAP archive
- WRHA partnership
- Networks

**Barriers**

- Responses are an art and a science
- Legal liability: HIROC coverage
- Resource implications: Archive streamlines responses; responses used for website content
- Some remote communities don’t have reliable Internet
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