

BEYOND

The Bereavement Authority of Ontario magazine

Issue 4 - September 2022

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About Beyond

Beyond is an all-digital, family-focused magazine providing useful and interesting stories about the bereavement care industry and why it matters to you.

It is the magazine of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario, a government delegated administrative authority focused on protecting and informing families.

www.TheBAO.ca

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Beyond magazine is published in partnership with [MDR Strategy Group Ltd.](#)

BAO offering greater services and consumer protection

Straight Forward Blog

By Carey Smith, CEO & Registrar, BAO

We are adapting and growing our services for grieving families in the province.

The Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) concluded our fiscal-year-end review with the latest [annual report](#) published to our website noting many changes, including an expansion of staff.

Beyond consumer protection, our role is to protect the broad-er public interest. What does that mean?

It means that we're here to ensure the care, good order and dignity of cemeteries in perpetuity. It also means that we're here to ensure that human remains of loved ones are treated safely, with respect and decency.

The end of the fiscal year on March 31, 2022, marked a new



start for the BAO because we made great progress on key business objectives during the previous 12 months.

Inspections

We have focused on revamping our inspection strategy to prioritize inspections based on an assessment of risk of harm to consumers and expanded the rigour of licensing compliance to better serve and protect consumers.

In the second year of COVID-19, we continued to protect grieving families and bereavement sector staff by adapting quickly to each change in the pandemic. See my COVID-19 Report on page nine of our annual report.

For more information on the previous fiscal year, please read my complete message on page seven of the BAO annual report.

BAO's consumer protection actions in the news

Headford Cemetery still blocking family's burial

Eight months later, Headford Cemetery in Richmond Hill continues to block the burial of a family's loved one.

Rev. Art Lambert, of the Nativity of the Mother of God Orthodox Church, has been refusing to comply with the law and court orders that the cemetery must allow the burial. The church and Headford Cemetery are on the same property in Richmond Hill. Rev. Lambert and lawyer Tanya Lambert are the contacts for a company, called September 21 Inc., that owns the cemetery.

The family complained to the Bereavement Authority of Ontario in January, followed on

Jan. 26 by the BAO's Registrar ordering the cemetery not to interfere in the burial.

Despite the BAO order and subsequent Ontario Superior Court Of Justice rulings, including one on Aug. 17, the burial is still being blocked.

"This Court orders that the interment of Louis Tsotsos at Headford Cemetery shall take place as soon as possible and in any event by no later than August 31, 2022," states the Ontario Superior Court Of Justice order. That date has come and gone.

The story was covered by the [CBC](#) and by [CityNews](#).

BAO Registrar's Decision: Benjamin's directed to pay back its 10% fee on memorial donations to charities, and disclose the fee on its websites' price lists

The BAO Registrar issued a decision at the end of July that a Toronto funeral home pay back a 10 per cent fee charged on memorial donations to a charitable foundation, controlled by the owners of Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel.



Headford Cemetery, in Richmond Hill, is on the same property as the Nativity of the Mother of God Orthodox Church.

Benjamin's has since reported that it is halting its 10 per cent charge on charitable donations. The other parts of the Registrar's Decision concerning refunding charities that were charged the 10 per cent fee are to be dealt with in court.

There has been media attention since the complaint was received by the BAO and the Registrar's Decision was made.

[The Canadian Jewish News](#), [CityNews](#), the [CBC](#) and other media have covered this story.

Other BAO posts about its consumer protection work can be found in these two BAO web sections:

- [Suspensions/Revocations/Conditions/Discipline](#)
- [Notice to the Consumer](#)

Honouring a child can be done in meaningful ways

When asked what they would have done differently if given the opportunity, many parents who've lost a child say they wish they would have explored more options when planning the funeral, says Lisa Athan, a certified grief recovery specialist at Grief Speaks.

"I've had parents say that they wish the funeral professional would have been more a little more patient or would have asked them more about their child," she explains. "When parents are in shock or grieving, it's often really hard to advocate for themselves, but the more they can say 'can we slow down a minute?', 'can I tell you about my child?', the better they can do what makes the most sense for their family."

Child memorials

In her 25-year career, Joanne Jonovich, manager at Ward Funeral Home in Woodbridge and past president of the Ontario Funeral Service Association, has had the opportunity serve many families who have lost little ones. Some funerals stand out to her as meaningful because she knows the families felt good about what they did. At a memorial attended by school-aged children, Jonovich and her staff transformed the funeral home into an environment where the children would feel at ease. "We displayed some of the deceased child's favourite artwork and school projects," she says. "We also had a colouring station and a candy-making station with some of the child's favourite candies."

Jonovich recalls another family she served whose son was a superhero fan. "Based on his love of Superman, I made the recommendation to dress him in a superhero outfit instead of traditional clothing," she explains. "They thought it was the best idea ever." The concept expanded into a themed funeral in which the guests wore red, blue and yellow to match the young boy's superhero suit.

There are no silly questions or requests

Athan encourages families to speak their minds when working with funeral directors. “Most funeral directors are wonderful, but sometimes when it’s a child loss, they’re having their own feelings and grief and may forget to present all the options,” explains Athan. “I always say to the grieving person, ‘sorry to put something else on you, but it’s important to ask for what you want.’”

“We had a little girl who was nine, and her favourite colours were purple and green,” says Jonovich. “Well, guess what? We had the casket painted purple and green with matching balloon arrangements and table linen.”

Jonovich says there is no request that is too silly to ask of a funeral director. “If it truly can’t be done, it can’t be done, but I think we need to give families the opportunity to ask,” she says. “Where we can find a way to make it happen, we should be prepared to do that, especially if it makes their funeral that much more meaningful and helps them deal with their grief.”



Tale of two Irvines:

Half a province apart – separate funeral homes share adaptive family approach

More than 770 kilometres apart, two separate family-owned Irvine funeral homes share common values and care in how they cater to grieving families' changing needs in changing times.

Irvine & Irvine Limited, Iroquois Falls & Cochrane

Irvine & Irvine Limited in Iroquois Falls and Cochrane is an eight-

hour drive north of Irvine Memorial in Brockville and Maitland.

The family-owned businesses are not connected corporately. But the two nonetheless share a similar approach to the communities they know so well.

At each it's all about family – their family of businesses, customers and the small towns they serve. In both cases, their businesses are expanding significantly to serve their communities.

The everyday focus at Irvine & Irvine's four locations is on old and new traditions, says Jamie Rheault, co-owner of the business with his wife Carine Deschênes.

"As young entrepreneurs, we are proud to be part of the development of northeastern Ontario. We are proud to say that our family business is locally owned



Jamie Rheault and his wife Carine Deschênes, pictured with their two sons, are co-owners of Irvine & Irvine Ltd.

and operated,” says Rheault, who adds that their nine and 12-year-old sons are frequently at work with them.

Growth

In 2009, the funeral director couple bought Irvine & Irvine Funeral Homes, located in the former pulp and paper town of Iroquois Falls. They have also built Northern Crematorium in the town of 4,458 residents.

In 2016, they purchased Genier Gauthier Funeral Home, 50 kilometres north in the mining town of Cochrane, where 5,390 people live. Three years later, they bought Abitibi Funeral Service in Iroquois Falls. All locations serve several surrounding communities.

Their business is a matter of pride, he says. “Our pride is per-

sonal, because we are not serving customers, but indeed neighbors and friends. Operating a funeral home in a small town means that we are constantly on duty.”

He explains, “It doesn’t matter where we go around town, we must be ready. When we go for groceries, it always takes longer because we are stopped in every aisle by people asking questions, seeking advice or consoling.”

Small towns

“Another reality is that our small-town hospitals do not have facilities to keep people after they die. This means the hospital calls to let us know of a passing and we must attend right away. Often families wait for us to arrive as we might do an honor guard leaving the hospital (with the deceased). So, we don’t have a schedule, as



Funeral directors Jamie Rheault and Carine Deschênes serve their local towns. But the couple also fly in to more remote communities in northern Ontario to serve grieving families, as they did three years ago in Pikangikum First Nation.

we handle everything ourselves from the removal right to the final disposition.”

“Sometimes the train is not an option, and we charter a plane to return the deceased and family members to their community. Once back home, families can proceed with the traditional Indigenous burial rites.”

-Claire Deschênes

Serving First Nations

Sometimes that community approach means leaving the homebase to cater to the needs of their vast and sparsely populated northern Ontario area. One example of this, in 2019, was the couple’s one-hour-and-45-minute flight from Cochrane to Pikangikum First Nation, accessible only by plane. They were returning a deceased teenager to her family.

Carine Deschênes says, “Something that makes us unique is serving many First Nations communities, which are remotely located along the Hudson Bay coast and only accessible by

plane or by train. Our work consists of embalming and preparing the deceased in the casket before the final journey home on the Polar Bear Express train from the Cochrane station – right across the street from our funeral home.”

They more often serve other northern communities such as Fort Albany, Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Moosonee and Moose Factory, an island in Hudson Bay.

Processions and coroner duties

In addition to arranging funeral services and a local tradition of automobile processions “around town” enroute to the crematorium, they have also made livestreaming funerals a standard option, as many establishments did during COVID restrictions.

“Another very demanding duty is assisting the coroner with



Moosonee and Moose Factory are mainly served by train. Here a casket is placed on a train at the Cochrane railway station.



Jonathan Irvine, who operates his family business with partners, is proud of the new columbariums recently added indoors and outside at their cemetery.

body transportation for when investigations are required,” she explains. “We cover a territory of about 200 kilometres along the Highway 11 corridor, and when autopsies are required, we must drive about 400 kilometres (round trip) to get them done.”

Jamie Rheault adds, “At the end of the day we walk into our home with the fulfillment of our duties accomplished, and we celebrate our family life by spending time with our two boys, sharing a good meal and listening to music.”

Irvine Memorial, Brockville & Maitland

The family roots that started the Irvine Memorial Funeral Home in Brockville have expanded in the community in recent years to include a cemetery and

crematorium in nearby Maitland.

“We meet our families with personalization at front of mind, as we want to understand what is important to them in honouring their loved ones,” says Jonathan Irvine, co-owner of Irvine Memorial, whose father Brent started the business in Brockville in 1973.

Jonathan Irvine, who is a funeral preplanner and crematorium operator, is now enjoying growing the family business to accommodate traditional community funeral service needs and newer ones.

Expansion to suit area needs

The business has recently expanded in two areas: purchasing adjacent land for expansion of its cemetery; and the addition of more columbariums.

He joined the business in 2009. The next year substantial expansions were completed at its Roselawn cemetery, which has been renamed the Irvine Memorial Chapel and Reception Centre at Roselawn – reflecting the family origins of the growing business.

With 80 per cent of final dispositions in Ontario now being cremations, and reflected locally, his business saw the need to expand



Funeral director and co-owner Michael Galbraith joined the business 28 years ago.

its columbariums, which hold cremated remains.

“Through compassion and empathy, we are able to support unique personalization for the deceased,” he says.

Joining the business in 1994, Michael Galbraith is a funeral director and co-owner of the business with Jonathan Irvine and Select Community Funeral Homes Inc.

“Over the years we’ve seen an increase in the number of requests for cremations, which is why we added the crematorium and the

small chapel. This allowed families to participate in the process, whereas they used to have travel out of town.”

“We added columbariums including indoor ones that we now have, as well as cremation sections in the cemetery for families to have multiple options for their needs.”

He adds, “We’re finding the above-ground niche memorialization to be more popular now. The indoor columbarium, being the only one in the area, is becoming very popular within our community.”

Growth

The business has three locations: Irvine Funeral Home and Chapel in Brockville, where 22,116 people live; Irvine Memorial Chapel at Roselawn in Maitland, with a population of 1,200; and Roselawn Memorial Gardens, also in Maitland. All locations serve several surrounding communities in eastern Ontario.

Growth has been a pattern for the business. In 1999, the Irvine family bought Roselawn Memor-

Columbarium: A structure designed for the purpose of interring cremated human remains in niches or compartments.

Niche: A space in a columbarium or mausoleum wall to hold an urn.

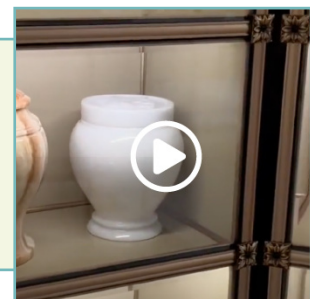
Urn: A container for the reduced and processed human remains resulting from cremation or alkaline hydrolysis.

[Read our feature on columbariums in Beyond’s March 2022 issue.](#)

ial Gardens cemetery from Arbor Memorial Services Inc. Three years later, the business opened its Roselawn Tribute Centre and Crematorium on the grounds of the cemetery. They’ve also recently expanded their cemetery grounds to include new columbariums.

(In a future issue of Beyond, we will present a feature story on the challenges, opportunities and issues of operating large funeral corporations.)

VIDEO: Click to have a closer look at niches in their columbarium, which reflects the increase in demand for cremations locally.





Burials, Cremation, Alkaline Hydrolysis

Learn about final disposition methods
provided in Ontario

Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Burlington

Burials: The traditional choice for reflection and history

Hamilton Cemetery

Cemeteries are often regarded merely as burial grounds for the departed and sanctuaries of reflection for family and friends.

However, they also serve as shrines to our history that represent the diversity of their communities.

Toronto Necropolis, a non-denominational cemetery west of the Don Valley, certainly has some history to tell.

Brandon Garcia, the cemetery's family service manager, says it is one of the oldest graveyards in the Greater Toronto Area.

In fact, it is the resting place of

several significant figures in Canadian history including the late New Democratic Party of Canada Leader Jack Layton and Anderson Ruffin Abbott, the first Canadian-born Black surgeon.



Anderson Ruffin Abbott, the first Canadian-born Black surgeon, was laid to rest at Toronto Necropolis.

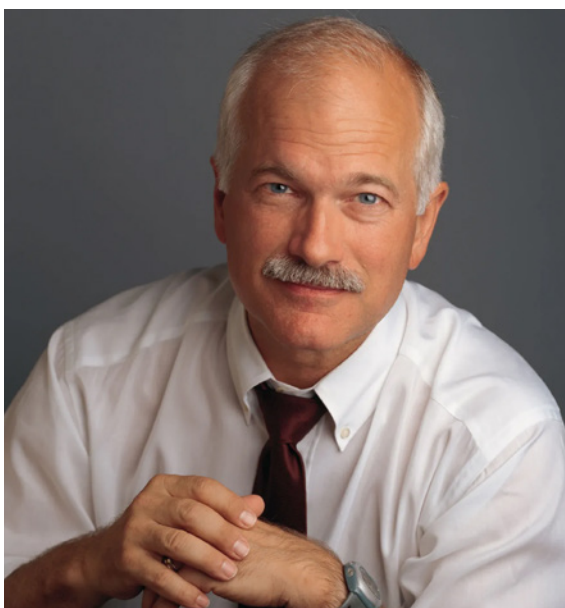


Toronto Necropolis

At Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa, where Canada's eighth Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden lies, religious and culture-specific sections were built in the early 20th century to recognize the city's diversity, says Nicolas McCarthy, Beechwood's director of marketing, communications, and community outreach.

He explains that this allows for community roots to be laid while enabling cemetery to serve the community and vice versa.

"We're really there for core services, but also for events and fundraising," he says of that property that is also Canada's national military cemetery.



Federal New Democratic Party of Canada Leader Jack Layton died in 2011. His remains are interred at Toronto Necropolis.



The gravesite of internationally renowned Hollywood artist Gregory Hines and his fiancée, Canadian bodybuilding champion and actress Negrita Jade.

At St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Cemetery in southern Ontario lie prominent figures in Canadian and international politics and the arts.

Famed American Emmy and Tony award winning tap dancer, actor, and singer Gregory Hines died in 2003 and was laid to rest at the Oakville graveyard. His fiancée, Canadian bodybuilding champion and actress Negrita Jayde, who died in 2009, is buried beside Hines.

A few plots away lies Mykola Plawiuk, the last president of the Ukrainian People's Republic in exile, who passed away in 2012.

In Hamilton, John Perrotta, supervisor of cemeteries for the



Gregory Hines and his fiancée Negrita Jade -Photo: Google



Veteran graves at Hamilton cemetery

city, says Hamilton's multiple municipal cemeteries have a larger overall significance in the community.

Hamilton's first mayor, Colin Campbell Ferrie, was buried in Hamilton Cemetery as were a handful of other prominent politicians, including Sir John Strathearn Hendrie the 11th lieutenant governor of Ontario. Isabella Whyte, the rumoured half-sister of Queen Victoria, who died in 1865, also lies in Hamilton.

In addition to the significance of some of the departed, Perrotta notes that particularly during

the COVID-19 pandemic, these municipal cemeteries have been peaceful, picturesque sanctuaries that people visit for their mental health.

The deep connection residents form with cemeteries in their communities often stays with them throughout their lives, says Perrotta, who adds, "I've found that even when people move out of the city, they always want to come back to be buried where they grew up."

Beyond will feature more cemetery stories in its future editions.



Cremation: Ontarians' preferred method of final disposition

Today, close to 80 per cent of final dispositions in Ontario are cremations, which has people turning to scattering ashes, or using urns or niches within outdoor and indoor columbariums.

The rate of cremations across the country has been increasing for more than 20 years.

Michael Galbraith, funeral director and co-owner of a funeral home and cemetery in Brockville and Maitland, says he has seen demand for cremations increase substantially over the years. It's

up so much so that they have had to expand to meet families' preferences.

"We added columbariums including indoor ones that we now have, as well as cremation sections in the cemetery for families to have multiple options for their needs."

He adds, "We're finding the above-ground niche memorialization to be more popular now. The indoor columbarium, being the only one in the area, is becoming very popular within our community."



Columbariums at St. John's Dixie Cemetery & Crematorium in Mississauga

Funeral directors have said people choose it over more elaborate coffin burials in cemeteries to have more straight-forward and lower-costs services, with some choosing direct cremation without a funeral service.

VIDEO:

Scattering ashes:

Watch this short video on scattering ashes from Carey Smith, CEO & Registrar, BAO.



Rick Whittingstall, of St. John's Dixie Cemetery & Crematorium in Mississauga, shows visitors the crematorium.

Alkaline Hydrolysis: A lesser-known option

A newer and lesser-known form of disposition of a loved one's remains is alkaline hydrolysis.

In addition to burials, cremations and scattering of ashes, alkaline hydrolysis is an option at four BAO-licensed facilities across the province. The process gained more attention last year when news that South African Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who died in December 2021, had chosen the alternative disposition. As described in the BAO's Consumer Information Guide, alkaline hydrolysis is "a chemical process that uses a heated solution of water and potassium hydroxide or sodium hydroxide under pressure and agitation to reduce a body to components of liquid and bone."

Colin Wartman, Owner/Funeral Director at Wartman Funeral Home Inc. in Kingston and Napanee, says he learned of alkaline hydrolysis in his search for alternative dispositions several years ago.

After some research, and discussions with funeral operators in other provinces, he decided that he would offer the choice to families.

Alkaline hydrolysis

Is a chemical process that uses a heated solution of water and potassium hydroxide, or sodium hydroxide, under pressure and agitation to reduce a body to components of liquid and bone.

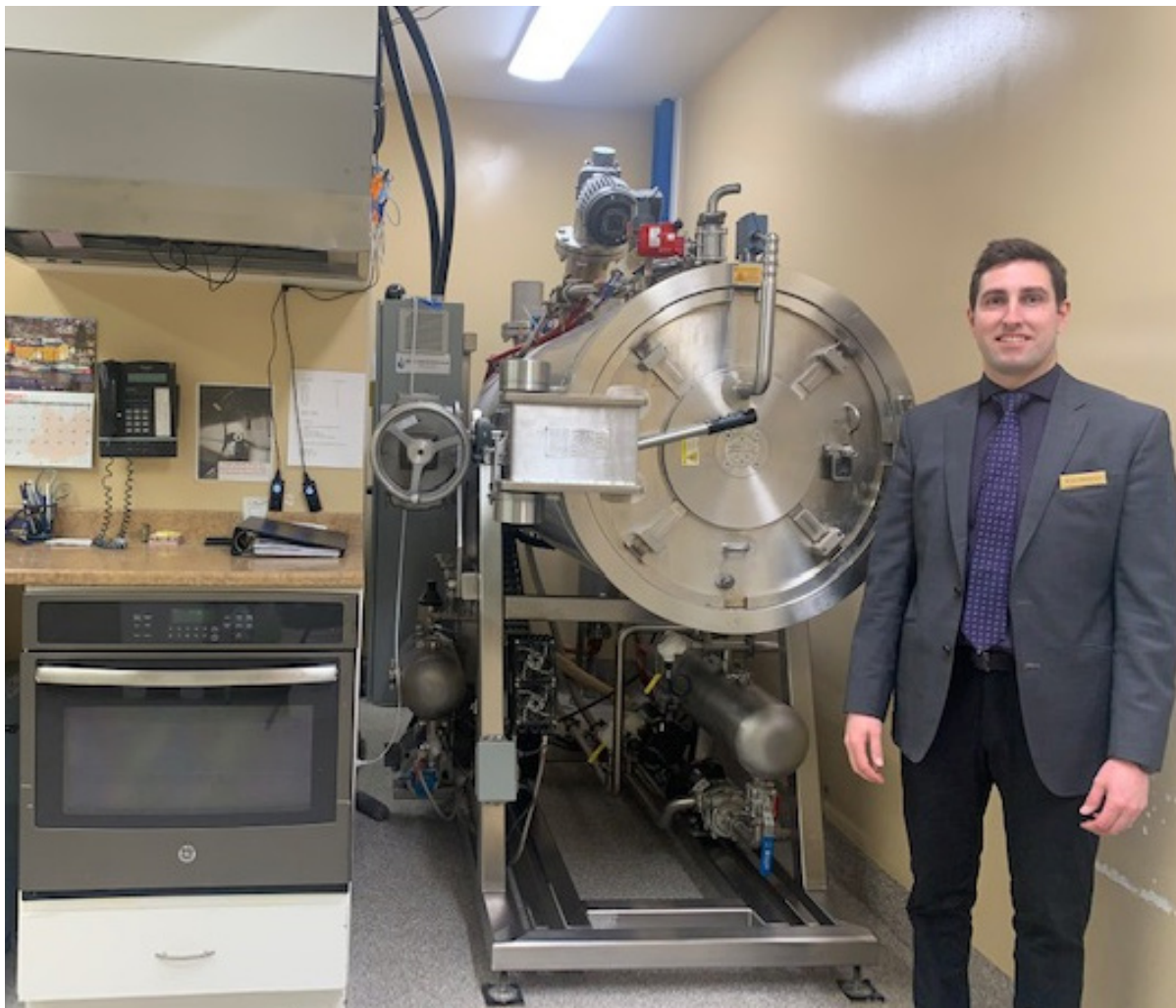
“My experience is that once they understand the process – the pros and cons – they can make an informed decision based on that information,” says Wartman.

Kelly Roantree says that her family selected alkaline hydrolysis at Wartman Funeral Home in 2021 to honour the life of their late mother.

Minimizing fossil fuels was something Roantree said was harmonious with her mother’s wishes.

“My experience is that once they understand the process – the pros and cons – they can make an informed decision based on that information.”

-Colin Wartman



Ryan Wartman, Funeral Director and alkaline hydrolysis (AH) operator, stands in the AH prep room at the Kingston funeral home location.

Good Grief:

Grief is part of the lived experience – even at work

By Serena Lewis, MSW, RSW



For Canadians preparing for their workday, there is a semblance of organizing what will be needed – what shall do we bring and leave?

Work, as diverse as our society, requires different preparation and planning, yet there is a commonality; an internal switch of 'being at or doing work' occurs. Whether it is a coffee, meals,

snacks, or perhaps a uniform to wear, we all have some assembly of readying ourselves.

One question I continue to ask of us as managers, co-workers, caregivers and administrators: what do we expect of ourselves and others with the grief we have become immersed in?

Do we pack it, or leave it?

The adage that we leave our personal lives in our private spheres needs to be considered as we understand that:

1. Physically, we were granted one heart and one brain - both of which we require interchangeably for work and home life. These biological organs are needed to be healthy to navigate our personal, professional, and private lives.
2. Emotionally, there never truly was a switch; this has been an

unrealistic expectation that we 'shut it off' or hide it. The consequences are mounting with the impacts.

3. Mentally, we understand that grieving is a process, a verb, which requires internal and external support & compassion to process.

how we gather, the significance of rituals and importantly – the need for connection during times of loss.

Navigating the integration of grief in the workplace is a process we will be tasked with as individuals experiencing loss. Psychological safe, trauma-in-



Spiritually, we know for many losses, our sense of peace and the life we knew are shaken; therefore, we too are undergoing a process that is life altering, deepening or disrupting a sense of who we were, will become, and importantly how we view the world around us.

4. Socially, we live in a world that has seen major disruption in

formed, and grief-friendly workplaces are needed. In fact, they have always been needed.

Grief education, skills and improved literacy will be necessary for each and all of us as we honestly face our collective past, our complex present, and our understanding of requirements for the future.

We are a country in a deep process of deconstructing a col-

lective history that has neglected grief and trauma incurred and faced by so many peoples. A country that has been in the throes of a pandemic that shook and redefined the very foundation of life as we knew it.

As we continue to face economic disparities due to labour market disruption and the subsequent impacts on housing and poverty,

incurred relationship transitions and endings, geographic moves, and dying and death; grief is part of our lived experience.

Beyond brief acknowledgement of condolences, we now need to become a country that recognizes that grief is a part of us, our families, our communities and, yes, our workplaces.



Expanding on our understanding, knowledge, and skills of psychological safety at work includes understanding that we bring our grief to work- and we also carry our grief home from work; and for all caregivers,

these two are synonymous. Our shared humanity requires us to recognize the very premise of healing as an interactive, intentional, and compassionate process.

Serena Lewis, MSW, RSW has more than 20 years of experience working in the fields of health and long-term care, education, and non-profit sectors.



Prepaying or prearranging funerals reduces stress on your grieving family

Most people don't think about the end of their lives. But they should – especially when it comes to pre-arranging their funeral services.

An Oakville resident's grandfather did just that for his entire family in Oldcastle, 15 kilometres outside Windsor. In 1932, the former cemetery worker acquired 42 plots for his family. (The story was covered by [CTV News](#).)

Dustin Wright, vice-president of marketing and communications at Arbor Memorial Inc., says there are many reasons why pre-planning helps families.

Pre-planning helps families

"It provides a sense of security so that your wishes are carried out exactly how you want them to be," says Wright. "It also provides your family with comfort, knowing that everything is being taken care of."

Apprehensions resolved

Discussing funerals, and the grief process in general, is very

emotional, and decisions need to be made with the best in mind for surviving loved ones, says Sherri Tovell, general manager of Families First Funeral Home in Windsor. She says that although an individual may be hesitant to discuss their own funeral, family members can have their apprehensions resolved by an impartial source.

“We can ask those tough questions, whereupon the family members can know what their mom or dad really wanted well beforehand,” says Tovell.

Update wishes

It is a sentiment echoed by Mac Bain, funeral director of North Bay’s Martyn Funeral Home, who sees prearranged services as a snapshot in time. Families are encouraged to update their wishes every few years to stay current and be informed about the finer details of the servicing, such as potential organ donations.

“Having those adult conversations with your adult kids is healthy, and it prepares them for eventualities, or unforeseen surprises, in regard to what their family wants,” Bain says.

One of the biggest factors in-

involved in the grieving process has to do with finances, which Tovell says is taken into account with pre-planned arrangements. A contract is created, and once validated, matched to the family’s preferences no matter what.

Contracts guaranteed

“The contract is guaranteed,” Tovell says. “If a family pays today, and they don’t pass away for 10 or 20 years, the interest accumulates on the principal funds that offsets the price of inflation overtime. If there is enough money in the account that the interest has covered, any excess money may go back to the estate, so it is a win-win for the consumer as they will only have to pay for something that wasn’t on the contract.”

Along with alleviating financial stress, pre-arranging provides the opportunity to discuss personal preferences with loved ones in advance so that they will not have to bear all the responsibility during an emotional time, says Wright.

While most people expect to live full lives, many unforeseen circumstances can happen to anyone, whether adult or children, healthy or ill. The advan-

tage behind pre-planning grants a family the time they need to grieve on their own terms.

The BAO's Consumer Information Guide succinctly outlines the benefits of pre-planning on page 18:

- It saves your family and friends from having to make difficult decisions during a time of grief.
- It gives you a say in planning your own arrangements.
- It gives you time to assess and compare your options.
- Prepaying may reduce or eliminate the financial burden on your family.

“It provides a sense of security so that your wishes are carried out exactly how you want them to be,” said Wright. “It also provides your family with comfort, knowing that everything is being taken care of.”

- Dustin Wright

Minimize pressure

Bain says that prearranged funeral services can also circumvent strained family dynamics, so that loved ones can feel at ease when the death occurs, and that the grieving process can occur without additional pressure. “Having those healthy conversations with loved ones about prearrangements, and knowing one’s wishes ahead of time, is a benefit to the family during any point in their lives.”



A Guide to Death Care in Ontario

Everything you need to know.

*For more information about prearranging funeral services, please read pages 17-20 of the **BAO's Consumer Information Guide.***

“ We felt safe.

We checked the
Canadian Regulatory Guide. ”



Informing the Public - Promoting Regulators - Protecting Canadians



www.regulatoryguide.ca