



Compassionate Community
Action Guide



This Action Guide is recommended after the completion of a Compassionate Community Index (CC Index) survey by a community group to assess the readiness of their community to become a more Compassionate Community.

The Action Guide suggests a variety of activities and project ideas to consider for building upon the community's level of readiness and commitment in each of the five sections in the CC Index.

The Action Guide highlights the level of difficulty in implementing each action as follows:

EASY

MODERATE

ADVANCED

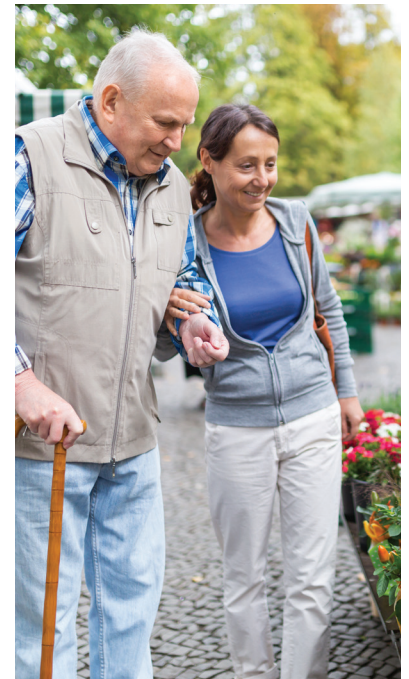
TIPS:

Start with awareness and advocacy activities to build a commitment at all levels towards making your community more compassionate.

As your community moves forward, you can build momentum and success by adopting other features of the Compassionate Community Index, moving from section A through section E.

If your tally in a section of the CC Index indicates the community has not started, or just started, it is not recommended that you attempt an action or project that is too advanced - or requiring many resources - to begin with.

Compassionate Community Index is a survey that assesses communities with respect to their level of readiness, commitment and efforts to become a more Compassionate Community. The results of the survey will identify strengths and opportunities for growth that the community can use to guide actions towards building a Compassionate Community.



The **Compassionate Community Index** and **Facilitator Handbook** are available from the BC Centre for Palliative Care. For more information please visit us at www.bc-cpc.ca.

A. AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

Features from the Compassionate Community Index:

1. Most people I know in our community plan in advance for the way they want to be treated and cared for during illness and near end of life.
2. Our community hosted at least one interactive public forum in the past two years where the topic of compassionate community was discussed.
3. Our community often hosts awareness events about death, dying, grief, loss and living fully (e.g. Advance Care Planning sessions, Bucket List Festivals, Film Festivals, Death Cafes).
4. The health care professionals I know in our community are aware of existing community support services and recognize their work as an important component of holistic care.
5. In our community, there is a strong coordinated voice that advocates for and supports the idea of creating a compassionate community.

Actions and ideas to consider:

EASY

- Host a community forum to introduce and discuss the Compassionate Communities idea ([Pallium CC Forum Toolkit](#))
- Compassionate Communities Walk ([BCCPC Case Study](#))
- Grief/ Memorial Walk
- Bucket List Festival
- Grief tattoo public displays
- Death Cafes ([BCCPC Case Study](#))
- Festival of Lights – lighting lanterns for loved ones
- Hello Conversation Game events ([BCCPC Case Study](#))
- [‘Before I Die’ Boards](#)
- [Japanese Wind Phone](#)
- Advance Care Planning sessions ([BCCPC Case Study](#))

MODERATE

- Deathtival (death, grief, living fully films and explorations)
- Photo Challenge (to document and display examples of CC)
- Meet with local media to brief them on CC initiatives and their importance and impact
- Meet with health care professionals to showcase community support services and their contributions to care.

ADVANCED

- Advocate for the Compassionate Communities lens to be adopted in policies by municipalities, schools, major employers, unions
- Compassionate Community Parade
- Partner with local media on CC initiatives

B. ATTITUDES & COMMITMENT

Features from the Compassionate Community Index:

1. End of life is not a taboo subject in our community. In fact, conversations about caregiving, dying and grieving have been normalized.
2. People in our community support each other practically during experiences of serious illness, when facing mobility issues, or dealing with grief.
3. Our community embraces compassionate behaviours and looks out for those in need for support and socially isolated.
4. Our community engages health care professionals, the municipality, other leader organizations and volunteer groups to develop home-grown solutions to help those in need for support and socially isolated.
5. The municipality/City Council has made a commitment to adopt the Compassionate City Charter.

Actions and ideas to consider:

EASY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hello Conversation Game events (BCCPC Case Study)• Advance Care Planning sessions (BCCPC Case Study)• Story-telling event• Youth short story competition
MODERATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grief support• Supplemental grief support program (e.g. walking programs)• Compassionate Communities citizen award• Story-telling festival• Video competition• Grief songwriting workshop• Employing Art, Music and/or Play Therapy (BCCPC Case Study)• Compassionate City Charter adopted by Council
ADVANCED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CLICK – see (BCCPC Case Study) on CLICK or other programs looking at larger issues of social isolation and intergenerational connection• Training high school students to serve as compassionate companions• Grief support programs for children, youth• Yearly story-telling festival

C. LEADERSHIP & CAPACITY

Features from the Compassionate Community Index:

1. There is a recognized individual or organization in our community who/that takes the lead on compassionate community initiatives.
2. There are volunteers in our community who participate in compassionate community activities.
3. There is a recognized individual or organization in our community who/that coordinates the compassionate community volunteers.
4. There are community organizations (e.g. NGOs that work with seniors, aging, chronic diseases, the municipality, faith communities, etc.) that support or work collaboratively with the compassionate community initiative.
5. There are training opportunities and resources available in our community to support volunteers to carry out the compassionate community activities.

Actions and ideas to consider:

EASY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and connect with organizations that need to be involved (e.g. NGOs who work with seniors, aging, chronic diseases, the municipality, faith communities, etc.)• Host a forum where organizations in the community can become aligned with the goals of CC• Identify doable projects from the CC forum
MODERATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify a champion organization or person for the CC projects• Develop a means of coordinating of CC needs in the community• Train volunteers to carry out CC programs• Test CC ideas and projects that are identified in the forum• Enlist and engage the commitment of organizations that need to be involved (NGOs that work with seniors, aging, chronic diseases, the municipality, faith communities, etc.)
ADVANCED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide CC training and workshops for other groups in the community e.g. Legacy Arts Program – (BCCPC Case Study)• Engage the health care community to support and supplement the works of the CC initiative• An organization in the community is actively looking at reducing barriers to connection and other CC issues• Completed projects are evaluated and enhanced to become ongoing programs (and impact policies)

D. NETWORKS & CONNECTIONS

Features from the Compassionate Community Index:

1. There are support group(s) or organization(s) to check in with the unmet social needs of seniors, frail people, those facing social isolation and life-limiting illness, caregivers and other vulnerable people.
2. There are support group(s) or organization(s) in our community that help people feel connected while coping with significant changes in health status or social circumstances.
3. People in my community know how to find and access support services when needed.
4. Neighbours in our community often have strong social connections.
5. Overall, our community has strong social circles and networks of support.

Actions and ideas to consider:

EASY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighbourhood block party challenge• Collect and distribute information around existing services• Volunteer co-ordinated transportation services• Seniors Connect Cafes (social connection only) – (BCCPC Case Study)
MODERATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needs checklist designed and distributed (CC checklist that has social, practical, emotion, psychosocial and spiritual needs outlined)• Inventory and prepare database of individuals who have significant needs in each neighbourhood• Neighbour check-in program by phone or in person - (like 'Tuck-in' – see BCCPC Case Study)• Seniors Connect Cafes (social connection integrated with wayfinding/navigating services) – (BCCPC Case Study)• There is mapping of social circles for those in need• Grief support• Supplemental grief support program (e.g. walking programs)
ADVANCED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer or hub coordinator (community connector) to connect people across and outside their social circles• Volunteer or hub co-ordinator connecting volunteers to needs checklists of individuals• Neighbour Check-in Program - Coordination of community volunteers to meet non-medical needs of those in community (e.g. Nav Care and see BCCPC Case Study) like visiting, mowing lawn, meal drop-off, grocery shopping• Seniors Connect Cafes (social integrated with wayfinding/ navigating services, and limited medical support) - (see BCCPC Case Study)• Grief support programs for children, youth

E. OPPORTUNITIES & RECOGNITION

Features from the Compassionate Community Index:

1. There are people in our community who are actively engaged in identifying needs, new ideas and opportunities that support our compassionate community initiative.
2. There are people in our community who are actively exploring partnerships with other compassion-based initiatives such as age-friendly communities, dementia-friendly communities and programs that support homeless people.
3. Our community promotes and celebrates reconciliation with indigenous peoples, and memorials of other important community losses.
4. Our local media (including social media) often feature compassionate community success stories.
5. Our community hosts an annual award to recognize individuals (and/or organizations) who take on a commitment to the compassionate community initiative.

Actions and ideas to consider:

EASY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and Maintain an inventory of support programs and services• Identify and connect with organizations that need to be involved (e.g. NGOs who work with seniors, aging, chronic diseases, the municipality, faith communities, etc.)
MODERATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a public guide for support programs and services that exist in the community• Identify gaps in programs and support services• Create projects to address gaps• Meet with local media to brief them on CC initiatives and their importance and impact• Organize a Compassionate Community citizen award• Enlist and engage the commitment of organizations that need to be involved (NGOs that work with seniors, aging, chronic diseases, the municipality, faith communities, etc.)
ADVANCED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative (ongoing) programs to fill gaps• Partner with local media on CC initiatives