

## CHPCA 2021 Abstract – Bereavement and grief current state

**Presenters: Kathleen Yue and Anica Butters**

**1. Bios for presenters (100 word max each):**

*Kathleen Yue, RN, BSN, MN, CHPCN (C), Director, Strategic Initiatives, BC Centre for Palliative Care.*  
Kathleen is a nurse leader and educator in palliative care. She is committed to improving the quality of life of people affected by serious illness by supporting those who provide direct care. Through the BC Centre for Palliative Care, Kathleen has led province-wide collaborative projects to create practice support tools, processes and opportunities for ongoing learning and mentorship. Kathleen lives in Victoria, BC with her husband, two teenaged children and a rambunctious labradoodle.

*Anica Butters, HBSc (C), Research Assistant, BC Centre for Palliative Care*

Anica is an undergraduate student in the Faculty of Arts & Science at the University of Toronto. She is dedicated to improving access to quality palliative care for individuals facing life-limiting illnesses. Anica has participated in two scoping reviews on grief and bereavement in informal caregivers, and she joined the BC Centre for Palliative Care in May 2021 as a Research Assistant. She is also a volunteer at Kensington Health's residential hospice and community support program in Toronto.

**2. Authors**

Rachel Carter, Nicolas Starkes, Eman Hassan, Kathleen Yue, Anica Butters

**3. Category:** Oral presentation

**4. Title of Presentation:**

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on grief and bereavement in BC: a province-wide current state analysis

**5. Abstract stream / themes:**

Stream 4 – Advance Care Planning, grief and bereavement: including research and KT and COVID-19.  
Sub-theme – bereavement and grief

**6. Description of presentation (max 245/250 words):**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of life and death. For those who have lost a loved one during the pandemic, even how they grieve has been affected. Because of restrictions on social gatherings, traditional supports for grief and bereavement are not accessible, often leaving

the bereaved to mourn in isolation. Support groups and volunteer programs have been disrupted along with traditional cultural ceremonies.

To better understand the changes in the provision of bereavement services in BC, we conducted a province-wide current state analysis. The analysis included a literature review to identify practices that have been effective in supporting people grieving during the COVID-19 pandemic or other relevant situations such as previous pandemics or large-scale crises. As well, we conducted a survey, adapted from a research study in the UK, and key informant interviews with organizations that support people through grief and bereavement services in BC, to understand how they have adapted their services. We collected the experiences of people who have become bereaved during COVID-19 through individual interviews, with trained bereavement counsellors.

The current state analysis will inform a provincial roundtable discussion with people with lived experience, service providers, experts, and other relevant key stakeholders. The roundtable aims to identify priority actions and effective strategies to adequately address the unmet needs of those bereaved during the pandemic, and to improve awareness of and access to existing best practices. The action plan and strategies will also apply to future situations that may impact grieving.

**7. Description of the skills and/or knowledge that participants will gain from your workshop, oral presentation or poster, and an explanation of how participants can apply the skills and/or knowledge within their communities**

Participants will learn from both the current state process and results. The process of literature review and survey questions will demonstrate the need to understand all angles of a situation before taking action; from the service providers, communities, and family perspectives. Participants can apply this process to better understand the situations they are trying to improve. The results of the current state analysis may be relevant to participant's local communities.

**8. For workshops, oral presentations or poster presentations, explain how your presentation will add to existing evidence-based knowledge in the field of hospice palliative care (maximum 100 words):**

The results of the current state analysis will add to the body of evidence-based knowledge by showing a comprehensive picture of bereavement services and experiences on a provincial scale.