

Medical Assistance in Dying

Support for Patients, Families and Caregivers



The Ottawa
Hospital

Disclaimer

This patient education resource is not medical advice. It shares common health facts, advice and tips. Some of the information provided in this resource may not apply to you. Please talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care team member to see if this information will work for you. They can also answer any questions or concerns that you might have.

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Introduction

It is normal to have many feelings and emotions when supporting a loved one through the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) process. Grief is a natural response to loss or future loss and the experience of grief is different for everyone. Bereavement is the period of time after a loss when we experience grief.

Many people find that the grief process with MAiD is very different than other loss they have experienced. Understanding this type of loss involves learning new ways to find meaning in the loss experience, putting this loss into perspective and working through the journey.

This resource gives information about feelings that family members and caregivers may have when their loved one is considering or having MAiD. It also lists specific community supports available to family members and caregivers. We hope that you find this resource helpful, regardless of where you live and where you are in your grief journey.

Is What I Am Feeling Normal?

Family members and caregivers of people who are considering or having MAiD may:

- Feel less prepared than their loved one and have a hard time accepting the situation;
- Have difficulty managing their distress while trying to stay involved in care and be supportive as they help their loved one at end-of-life;
- Find it challenging to share their feelings with others, particularly those who may not be as understanding of MAiD;
- Have feelings of isolation and frustration;
- Feel distressed about their loved one's decision to access MAiD;
- Find it difficult to work through their grief while also managing their regular lives.

All of the feelings above, and many others not listed, are part of the grieving process and are a natural response to the loss experienced with MAiD. If you find yourself struggling, we encourage you to seek support through the organizations listed below.

Access to Support

There are places and services where people can get help when they want to talk about their feelings about MAiD. These may include private counselling, counselling in community health centres, family doctor offices and/or employee assistance programs at work. These services work very well for some people but sometimes, these services may cost too much money, be too far away, or not be available to some people. Some people may also feel worried about asking for help, knowing that their family or community is not understanding and accepting of MAiD.

The organizations listed below recognize the need for MAiD-specific support and the need for an accepting community for individuals with lived experience with MAiD. Access to these supports is free and they are available in a variety of formats.

Bridge C-14

Bridge C-14 is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing meaningful connections of support for families and loved ones throughout all stages of MAiD. Bridge C-14 is committed to creating a culture where dignity, choice and grief are honoured and valued.

Contact Information

- www.bridgec14.org

MAiD Family Support Society

MAiD Family Support is a non-profit organization providing lived experience support and connection to people helping a loved one who is considering MAiD.

Contact Information

- www.maidfamilysupport.ca

Dying with Dignity Canada

Dying with Dignity Canada is the national human-rights charity committed to improving quality of dying, protecting end-of-life rights, and helping Canadians avoid unwanted suffering.

Contact Information

- <http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/>
- 1-800-495-6156 (toll free)

Bereaved Families of Ontario – Ottawa Region

Bereaved Families of Ontario – Ottawa Region's goal is to inspire hope and transformation in people who are grieving the death of a loved one.

Contact Information

- <http://www.bfo-ottawa.org/>
- 613-567-4278

Additional Resources

Crisis Lines

- Distress Centre 613-238-3311
- Distress Centre Lanark, Leeds and Grenville
1-800-465-4442
- Mental Health Crisis Line 613-722-6914
(within Ottawa) 1-866-996-0991
(outside Ottawa) <https://crisisline.ca/>
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
- Tel-Aide Outaouais:
1-800-567-9699 / 613-741-6433

Walk-In Counselling Clinics

<https://walkincounselling.com/>

Single service, free, walk-in counselling clinics. People do not need an appointment to get counseling. These services are offered in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Somali, Cantonese and Mandarin (location dependent). Counselling services are offered in-person and virtually. These services can also help in referring to other local supports.

More Information about MAiD

- Canadian Virtual Hospice
 - » MAiD: <https://virtualhospice.ca/MAID> (there are some helpful videos)
 - » My Grief (<http://www.mygrief.ca/>)
 - » Kids Grief (<https://kidsgrief.ca>)
- Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association
<https://www.chpca.ca>



For more patient information please scan this QR code or visit :

<https://www.ottawahospital.on.ca/en/clinical-services/deptpgmcs/departments/medical-assistance-in-dying-aid/information-for-patients-and-loved-ones/>

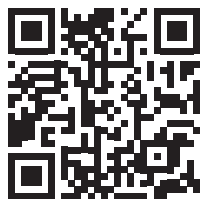


Notes



Do you have any feedback about this education resource?

Is it welcoming and respectful of your background, culture, and identity? Your opinion is important to us. Please fill out this [survey](#) or contact the Patient Education team at patienteducation@toh.ca



Do you need this information in a different format?

Please tell a member of your health-care team so that they can provide you with this information in a format that works for you. This resource is available in English and in French. Cette ressource est disponible en anglais et en français.



Booklet information

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