



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

# Central Family Forum

October 25 - 27, 2019

Nottawasaga Inn Resort, Alliston, Ontario

Program as of May 9, 2019. Program subject to change

## Day 1 – Friday October 25<sup>th</sup>

3:00-5:00 pm

Room Check-in  
Forum Registration

5:45 pm

Welcome Dinner

7:45 pm

Reflections Ceremony: Honouring our Families - Past and Present

## Day 2 – Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>

7:30-8:30 am

Breakfast Buffet

8:45 am

Opening Session: Welcome

9:00-9:30 am

Keynote Speaker: The View from Here

*Karen Lapierre Pitts, Family Member, Family Support Manager, Threads of Life*



In a matter of minutes, your life can change forever. Karen's family experienced an unexpected loss that will last a lifetime. How do you move ahead when faced with adversity and heartache? Karen and her family have found a way to forge ahead in memory of their family member and in the name of prevention.

The 2019 Central Family Forum has been generously supported by:



## Day 2 – Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>

9:30-9:45 am

### Coffee Break

### Workshops

9:45 am -12:15 pm

#### Masks of Grief and Loss

Karen Lapierre Pitts, Family Support Manager, Threads of Life

In this session, you'll understand how we wear various masks to get through our daily lives and what we can do to safely take off those masks to deal with our journey. Whether your situation involves the loss of life, a traumatic injury or occupational disease, you will benefit from the insights gained in this session. You'll have a short period of time to share with the other participants a piece of your family story and what brought you here. This session will help you develop a connection to other family members attending the family forum and give you a more meaningful experience.

**Please note:** this workshop is highly recommended for family members attending their first family forum. The session will be limited to a maximum of 12 participants.

#### Am I going crazy? Emotional and Mental Well Being

Karen Simmonds, Certified Grief Counsellor and Educator

This is the most asked question I receive as a Grief Counsellor. When we experience trauma our feelings can often make us feel like we are going crazy! Symptoms of grief, anxiety and depression can present themselves in many similar ways. With an understanding of the similarities and differences between these and strategies to help support yourself, I hope you leave the workshop with a clearer mind!!

#### The Connected Volunteer

Lorna Catrambone, Regional Development Coordinator, Central Canada, Threads of Life

Mentorship is important for volunteers to help them be successful in their roles, navigate the organization and feel like a part of the team while they volunteer. Through this workshop, volunteers will gain insight into how to create a network of mentors and other supports.

#### Widows Moving Forward & Society's Expectations

Audrey Stringer, Palliative and Bereavement Support Counsellor & Motivational Speaker

The death of someone close – a partner or spouse – can result in overwhelming grief that is difficult for people to cope with. It hurts emotionally, spiritually and physically. You may wonder if you will ever heal and live life to the fullest again. Yet society has unrealistic expectations that people should move forward quickly with their lives. Your grief journey is painful but necessary for healing. Find out how you can overcome the pain, use grief constructively and learn new strategies to experience new hopes and dreams for the future.

9:45-11:15 am

#### Blogs and Stories

Susan Haldane, Manager, Communications, Threads of Life

One of the beliefs of Threads of Life is that sharing your story helps you heal. It can also help change the workplace culture. In this workshop, you will learn about the impact a story can have, identify your own motivations for sharing your story, understand the elements of an effective story, and take a crack at crafting an effective short version of your story.

12:15-1:15 pm

### Networking Lunch

### Workshops

1:15-4:30 pm

#### Taking a Vacation from Grief

Karen Simmonds, Certified Grief Counsellor and Educator

It is hard to get a break from grief! The feelings can be all-consuming and overwhelming. In this session, we will develop an understanding of grief and discuss why 'Taking a Break' is not only healthy but a necessary part of the healing journey. We will discuss strategies and ideas to help you take mini-vacations from grief.

## Day 2 – Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>

### Workshops 1:15-4:30 pm

#### Presentation Skills

Debbie Glenn, Regional Community Coordinator, WSPS

Public speaking can make anyone nervous. Learn how to improve your presentation skills with a few easy tips. By eliminating filler words, you can learn to embrace the seconds of silence – take the time to breathe and you will find you are capturing the attention of the audience as well as keeping yourself calm.

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#### Embracing Change

Audrey Stringer, Palliative and Bereavement Support Counsellor & Motivational Speaker

Most life transitions begin with a story of losses: loss of a role, loss of a person, a place and a sense where you fit in the world. We will never be able to stop change from happening to us but learn how to stop fighting change. With a positive attitude, we can tap into our inner resources as we go through critical life events and emerge with strength, health and happiness forever changed.

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#### Mindfulness

Johanna LeRoux, Family Member, Threads of Life

“Mindfulness” is often overlooked as a stress-management tool due to the confusion between mindfulness and meditation. Although practicing Mindfulness can sometimes lead to the practice of meditation they are certainly not synonymous.

Now being examined scientifically, Mindfulness has been found to be a key element in stress reduction and overall happiness. It has been demonstrated to bring about improvements in physical and psychological symptoms including, helping relieve stress and anxiety disorders; reducing chronic pain; improving sleep, and alleviating gastrointestinal difficulties.

We will touch briefly on the difference between Mindfulness and Meditation and introduce you to simple tools to help you begin to incorporate Mindfulness into your daily experience.

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#### Travelling the Emotional Road from Grief to Peace

Barbara Collins, Registered Art Psychotherapist

As we seek to piece our lives together after a loss, art therapy can help us heal by allowing our memories, thoughts and emotions the opportunity to speak, to be heard and to be felt. The art process provides a break, a breath, and a reprieve from the pain that seeks expression. This workshop will take participants through a contemplative process encouraging them to be gentle with themselves, to grieve fully and to open their hearts toward the next steps in their life journey.

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2:45-3:00 pm

Coffee Break

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4:30-6:00 pm

Free Time

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6:00 pm

Reception (Cash Bar)

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6:30-8:00 pm

Dinner followed by Volunteer Recognition & Opportunities Presentation

Threads of Life is extremely fortunate to have many tremendous volunteers. This presentation will recognize our volunteers and highlight some of the ways that you too can volunteer and support Threads of Life.

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## Day 3 – Sunday October 27<sup>th</sup>

7:30-8:30 am

**Breakfast Buffet**

8:30-9:00 am

*Please check out of your room. The Front Desk can hold your luggage if needed or you may bring it to our main meeting room.*

### Workshops

9:00-11:45 am

#### Men Mending

Eugene Gutierrez, Family Member, Threads of Life

Men have their own creative and unique ways of supporting others in their experience of grief and loss. However, men will often say that it is difficult to find the opportunity, time or space, where they can truly talk with other men about their loss. In this session, participants will have the opportunity in a safe, non-judgmental place to share stories, describe challenges and share ideas for getting through tough times. Together we can support each other, offer hope, and explore strategies that can contribute to a brighter future.

#### Planting Self-Care Seeds Of Change

Barbara Collins, Registered Art Psychotherapist

Today's self-care workshop will give you the opportunity to cultivate and plant new self-care routines, understand the benefits of self-care and what gets in the way of us practicing self-care on a daily basis. We will walk a replica of the Chartres Labyrinth, planting our self-care seeds of change along the way. This workshop is a soothing way to internalize the supportive, conference community while beginning the transition back to your daily life.

#### Children & Teen Grief

Karen Simmonds, Certified Grief Counsellor and Educator

One minute they are crying and the next playing or hanging out with friends. So how do we, as adults, respond to and support grieving children?

In this interactive session, we will explore the nuances of childhood grief from the 'ages and stages' to acting-out behaviours and identifying red-flags.

#### Yoga Flow and Self Care

Morgan Story, Certified Yoga Instructor

Join us as we work through a gentle yoga flow to wake up the body and energize the mind. Learn calming techniques that can be used to help soothe through yoga and breath work. We will learn about Ayurveda (the sister science to yoga) using essential oils and other natural remedies.

10:30-10:45 am

**Coffee break**

12:00-1:00 pm

**Closing Lunch** and departure at 1:00 pm

**Safe travels home and hope to see you again next year!**

**Save the date: September 25 - 27, 2020**

Each worker and family member who has been affected by a workplace tragedy is a thread in the quilt of life. Each thread, by itself, cannot stand alone, but when woven together provides strength. Although we are individuals, we are also connected in the fabric of life.