



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Atlantic Family Forum

May 27 - 29, 2022

Oak Island Resort & Conference Centre, Nova Scotia

Program as of April 1, 2022 Program subject to change

Day 1 – Friday May 27th

3:00-5:00 pm

Room Check-in – Front Lobby
Forum Registration – Fireside Cafe

5:45 pm

Welcome Supper – Bluenose Room A

7:30 pm

Reflections Ceremony: Honouring our Families - Past and Present
Bluenose Room A

Day 2 – Saturday May 28th

7:30-8:30 am

Breakfast Buffet – Bluenose Room A

8:45-9:00 am

Opening Session: Welcome – Bluenose Room A

9:00-9:30 am

Keynote Speaker: The View from Here – Bluenose Room A

The 2022 Atlantic Family Forum has been generously supported by:



Day 2 – Saturday May 28th

9:30 am

Coffee Break – *Bluenose Foyer Area*

Workshops

9:45 am -12:15 pm

Masks of Grief and Loss for New Participants – Suite 311

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. Everyone will 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 recommended for those attending their first family forum. Members of one family are highly encouraged to attend different sessions so that each is able to share their own story. **The session will be limited to a maximum of 14 participants.**

When a Workplace Tragedy Hits Home – Mahone Room

Donna Green, Family Member

This session explores the impact on an entire family as an individual lives with a life altering injury or occupational illness. We will discuss the effects as they trickle from the person, who came home from work one day changed, to everyone in the family unit. We will discuss the effects on a spouse of their changing role in the family unit; the pressures upon the injured/ill person as well as their spouse; the struggles pertaining to everyday life with injured/ill person and how they affect their spouse. This session will include group discussions and sharing, as comfortable.

Dreamcatchers – Tancook Room

Marilyn D'Entremont, Family Member

The Spirits of Mother Nature speak to those who listen

To be able to sit quietly and be "one with nature" is one of the greatest personal gifts. In our busy lives, we are not always able to spend time with Mother Nature, to be able to sit quietly and to listen to her "whispers". Sometimes, those may be the very times we need to 'connect' with her the most. Together we will visit your own dreams and imagine your own 'visit' with nature and how we are all truly connected. I will guide you through the steps in making an authentic dreamcatcher, whose 'supplies' were borrowed from nature. This is an easy reflective time — space will be limited, giving participants a relaxed and somewhat spiritual nature based session (non religious).

Am I going crazy? Emotional and Mental Wellbeing – Lunenburg Room

Karen Simmonds, Certified Grief Counsellor and Educator

"Am I Going Crazy?" is one of the most common questions asked of a Grief Counsellor. When we experience trauma our feelings can often make us feel like we are going crazy! Confusion, mental fog and memory loss are normal responses to loss. Feelings and symptoms of grief, anxiety and depression can also 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!

12:15-1:15 pm

Networking Lunch – *Bluenose Room A*

Day 2 – Saturday May 28th

Workshop
1:30-4:00 pm

Blank Page — Using Words to Help you Heal – Suite 311

Susan Haldane, Manager Communications and Marketing, Threads of Life

One of the beliefs of Threads of Life is that sharing your story helps you heal. It's also true that writing about your experience can be helpful, whether you choose to share your writing with others or keep it in your drawer. In this workshop we'll explore some different ways to capture your experience in the written word. You'll gain confidence in your own ability to write and express yourself, and maybe even create a work of art that others can connect with. You don't have to be a writer to attend this session, but you might be one by the time you leave!

Noticing the Negativity Bias? Happiness Leaves Clues – Mahone Room

Shirley Hickman, Executive Director & Sharon Freeman, Coordinator, Threads of Life

Our brain is always changing, and we have the opportunity to make new pathways in our thinking. Learn to say "no" and change your brain pathway to create space for a positive emotional state. We can create a positive emotional state when we are happy, relaxed and curious. Let's share ideas and explore our paths.

Music and Mindfulness: Releasing Stress for Caregivers – Tancook Room

Mackenzie Costron, Certified Music Therapist, Registered Counselling Therapist, Heart Centered Facilitator

Although caregiving is rewarding and meaningful, it is certainly demanding and can cause burn out, stress, anxiety, grief, anger, irritability, insomnia, and loss of energy. This session aims to provide an open forum to express and release burn out, stress, and negative emotions. Session activities could include singing, instrumental improvisation, song-writing, art and music, lyric discussions, and music relaxation, to further acknowledge, process, and validate feelings. Both caregivers and loved ones of caregivers are welcome.

Grief & Loss 101 – Lunenburg Room

Karen Simmonds, Certified Grief Counsellor and Educator

Grief is a unique experience to everyone depending on the circumstances around the loss and present life situation. Though associated with death, grief is experienced with any type of loss such as physical health, divorce, moving and job changes. Feeling overwhelmed and unsure are normal responses to loss. During our time together we will explore the multi-dimensional aspects of grief, from common symptoms to coping strategies. As we unravel the complexities of grief and discuss any questions, doubts and fear may lessen and leave you feeling a little more at peace.

2:45 pm

Coffee Break – Bluenose Foyer Area

4:00-6:00 pm

Free Time

6:00 pm


Reception (Cash Bar) – Bluenose Foyer Area

6:30-8:00 pm

Supper followed by Volunteer Recognition Presentation – Bluenose Room A

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.

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.



Day 3 – Sunday May 29th

7:30-8:30 am

Breakfast Buffet – *Bluenose Room A*

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

9:15 -11:30 am

Widows Moving Forward & Society's Expectations – *Suite 311*

Marilyn D'Entremont, Family Member

I became curious about the process of grieving at a very young age when my mother died from cancer. Being the youngest of nine children, I witnessed each of my siblings reacting to the "same loss", but in their own very different ways. Years later, and after many more losses, I furthered my studies and received a diploma in Counselling Skills and Social Human Services. I bring wisdom from wonderful professors and Grief Specialists that I feel blessed to have learned from. We all have a story and there are none worse than our own — our Hearts and our stories connect us to one another, and through this sharing, we heal. This gentle session will hopefully help guide you through your questions; from misconceptions to a deeper understanding of this grief journey.

The Art of Resilience – *Tancook Room*

Caelin Nadin, Yoga Therapist and Anxiety Coach

Did you know that YOU have the power to regulate your own nervous system? In this session we will explore what is happening in our bodies and our minds after trauma. We will look at some interesting neurophysiology facts, how we can change how we react and how to break the continuous cycle of physical, psychological and biochemical stress. You will learn tools that will help YOU regulate your nervous system and manage moments in your life. There will be light movement, deep relaxation and education. You will receive handouts to support your continued home practice.

Taking a Vacation from Grief – *Mahone Room*

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.

Threads of Life Volunteers - Where do I fit in? – *Lunenburg Room*

Shirley Hickman, Karen Lapierre Pitts, Susan Haldane, Threads of Life

Volunteers started Threads of Life. Family members – just like you. If you are interested in sharing any of your life-skills, we are sure there is a way for you to help Threads of Life grow. At the same time you can gain experience and help others find healing. Our two-fold mandate, to provide peer support to family members and to promote the elimination of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths provide many opportunities. Whether you are a quiet behind-the-scenes individual or want to share your story at workplaces, colleges, etc or provide that much needed one-to-one listening, there is a volunteer role for you.

10:30-10:45 am

Coffee break – *Bluenose Foyer Area*

11:30-1:00 pm

Closing Lunch and departure at 1:00 pm – *Bluenose Room A*

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

Save the date: May 26 - 28, 2023