



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

# Atlantic Family Forum

May 26 - 28, 2023

Oak Island Resort & Conference Centre, Nova Scotia

Program as of February 15, 2023. Program subject to change

## Day 1 – Friday May 26<sup>th</sup>

3:00-5:00 pm

Room Check-in  
Forum Registration

5:45 pm

Welcome Supper

7:30 pm

Reflections Ceremony: Honouring our Families - Past and Present

## Day 2 – Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup>

7:30-8:30 am

Breakfast

8:45 am

Opening Session: Welcome

9:00 am

Keynote Speaker: The View from Here

9:30-9:45 am

Coffee Break

The 2023 Central Family Forum has been generously supported by:



## Day 2 – Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup>

### Workshops

9:45 am-12:15 pm

#### Masks of Grief and Loss for New Participants

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. Members of one family are 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.**

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#### Connecting with our Grief through Cultural Lineages

Emma Palumbo, Counselling Psychologist (MEd, RCT-C)

In this workshop, we will look at different cultural approaches to grief work and delve deeper into our own cultural and ancestral practices that connect us to processing grief, death, and dying. We will look at ritual as a practice for moving through grief and engage in a collective practice of connecting with our grief practices and rituals through writing and/or expressive arts. This workshop is built on the idea that we all possess what we need to grieve and that we can explore a multitude of ways to connect with grief and the loss of our loved ones.

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#### Trauma and Addictions

Roy Ellis, Therapist Educator

Addiction has a bad name in our society. It is really a self-soothing behaviour that we use to feel okay about feelings and experiences that aren't okay. This workshop will help participants understand why we seek to numb and dampen feelings with addictive substances and behaviours and how we can gently begin to help ourselves and those we love move courageously into our pain and our authenticity.

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#### Holding the Hope

Hilary Scott, Grief and Loss Support

Finding light and hope can seem impossible when your life has been shattered. How do we do this after a life changing loss? How do we cope with different situations that test our ability to feel even the tiniest thread of joy? How do we expand on the good and carry our losses going forward, knowing they now make up who we are? In this workshop we will look at these questions and see how we can navigate our way to a little light and hope.

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12:15-1:15 pm

Networking Lunch

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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 2 – Saturday May 27<sup>th</sup>

**Workshops**  
**1:30-4:00 pm**

### **Art Therapy, a Tool for Processing Grief and Celebrating Hope**

Evie Dunville, Artist Therapist

Join Art Therapist Evie Dunville for a workshop utilizing art to process grief and celebrate hope in the wake of loss. Many lack the words to describe their feelings and thoughts after experiencing loss. Others feel fear or shame around such expression, compounding their grief. Art Therapy provides a tool to communicate this complex experience without the necessity of words. Evie will provide context, and a safe place for guided creativity. No art experience necessary.

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### **Meeting the Unique Mental Health Needs of Men and Boys**

Nick Cardone, Registered Counselling Therapist/Clinical Lead

Many men and boys have unique needs when it comes to therapy. With high rates of death by suicide, poor seeking behaviours and high dropout rates in therapy, men's mental health statistics are at CRISIS levels.

While therapy as we know it (office/chair/talk) works for some, research tells us that other ways of 'doing' therapy have greater resonance for men and boys in distress or living with mental illness.

This workshop will explore the tremendous impact that breaking free of the traditional office setting can have on men and boys.

**Please note:** Anyone is invited to attend this workshop; it is open to men and women.

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### **Stress Reduction and Nervous System Self-regulation**

Caelin Nadin, Anxiety Coach & Somatic Therapist

In this workshop we will explore ways of regulating stress due to unresolved trauma. We will learn ways to help reduce anxiety and build resilience through somatic (body based) practice. Learn tools to regulate your nervous system so you can come back to fully participating in your life.

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### **The Many Faces of Grief**

Roy Ellis, Therapist Educator

We haven't grieved enough in our lives. We haven't grieved all the losses, small and big, daily and dynamic, personal and professional. Grief isn't just death. It isn't just a response to tragedy. Grief knits itself into every aspect of our lives but many of us do our best to ignore and downplay it. After death and trauma, there are dozens, sometimes hundreds of smaller associated griefs that impact our lives and relationships. If we were injured we may lose our autonomy, our health, our dignity and our identity. If we lost someone we may lose financial integrity, friends, identity as married and our trust in systems and organizations. Learning to grieve these associated losses is crucial if we are to heal from grief.

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**2:45-3:00 pm**

**Coffee Break**

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**4:00-6:00 pm**

**Free Time**

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**6:00 pm**

**Reception (Cash Bar)**

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**6:30-8:00 pm**

**Supper followed by Volunteer Recognition Presentation**

Join us in celebrating our amazing volunteers & learn some of the many opportunities you could volunteer to support families and work together towards prevention.

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## Day 3 – Sunday May 28<sup>th</sup>

7:30-8:30 am

**Breakfast**

8:30-8:45 am

*Please check out of your room. The Front Desk can hold your luggage if needed*

8:45-9:00 am

**Morning Welcome**

### **Workshops**

9:15-11:30 am

#### **Free and Clear: Expectations and Letting Go**

Mackenzie Costron, Co-Founder, Certified Music Therapist, Registered Counselling Therapist

Sometimes the letting-go process feels really empowering. And sometimes, we want to hold on (grip, cuddle, cling) to things. There are times to get amped up and “just let that stuff go.” But letting go usually involves other people, or hopes that we’ve carried a long time. Healthy letting go requires mindfulness. In this session, you will be guided through a process of releasing (accompanied by intentionally curated music) what you’ve been holding onto and exploring some expectations you have of yourself and other people.

#### **Nature and Adventure: Essential Aspects of the Wellness Equation**

Nick Cardone, Registered Counselling Therapist/Clinical Lead

Have you tried to buy a bike lately? Perhaps cross country skis or snowshoes? There is a reason these items are in short supply over the last 18 months, and it has taken a global pandemic for many people to start exploring the benefits of time in nature and adventure activities. Similarly, physicians and therapists are increasingly prescribing ‘time in nature’ as a form of vaccination against the other pandemic in our society - the staggering rates of depression, anxiety and addictions. This presentation aims to highlight the nature-wellness connections, provide deeper insights as to the impacts of a life lacking in nature or adventure, and explore sustainable and accessible ways to weave the natural world into our personal, familial, social and professional lives.

#### **Maybe Swearing will Help**

Hilary Scott, Grief and Loss Support

What tools do we need to navigate our grief that support us with our lives that are so different now? What helps us cope and what does not? What misinformation have we been given around grief and loss that does not serve us and how can we look at it differently? In this workshop, we will look at these questions and more to find ways to extend compassion to ourselves and others as we grieve our losses.

#### **Building a Toolkit for On-line Support**

Sharon Freeman, Coordinator, Threads of Life

In this workshop we will develop a toolkit for families that have experienced a workplace fatality. We will be using a creative process by working together to come up with tools to help families looking for support on-line. We will be focusing on new families and families three to five years into their journey. This will entail brainstorming and helpful information for new families that connect with us. Participants further along in their journey will be most helpful in this workshop to build the next step in peer support.

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: June 1 - 3, 2024**