



Grief and *letting go*

Each region and culture has its own beliefs, rituals and ceremonies for those leaving this world and those left behind.

Things to know

- Some rituals and ceremonies are meant for the time of passing or shortly after. Others occur throughout the year. Others mark one year from the person's passing.
- Traditional rituals include, for example, smudging, feasts, condolence ceremonies, 'wiping the tears' ceremonies, journey ceremonies, songs, and prayer.
- Medicines, sage, sweet grass, cedar, herbs, and grief tea are also used to help deal with the grief.

Things that may help

- Explain your beliefs and traditions to healthcare providers and let them know how they can help.
- If the patient is away from home, ask for a room where family and community members can gather.
- Ask if there is an Elder, smudging room and/or other resources to support you and your family.

"The greatest healing of all is to fill all your emotion with love and kindness."

Elder Eugene Harry
Cowichan Tribes, British Columbia

"I really pray for the people that can't let go, because when somebody is going away they want to hang on to them, hold them, and it causes them not to travel."

Elder Eugene Harry
Cowichan Tribes, British Columbia

Things that may help after someone has passed

- Tell stories.
- Use humour.
- Join a grief support group.
- Participate in ceremonies.
- Look and ask for support.

Helpful resource

MyGrief.ca helps you understand and work through your grief.

[If someone is passing away from home], it's crucial to have a space for the families to be able to gather together and to have Elders and healers and anyone they call upon to be able to be in that space to do ceremony, to have ceremony shared with them by the Elders and the healers, and just to have a place where they can feel some sense of comfort and peace.

Elder Roberta Price

Coast Salish peoples, British Columbia



CIRCLE OF LIFE BY TRACEY ANTHONY

To see the Indigenous Voices video series and to learn more about living with serious illness and grief, go to LivingMyCulture.ca

Also available:

- What is palliative care?
- Compassionate caring
- Care at home and away
- Helping you feel better
- What to expect
- Honouring wishes
- Making memories
- Grief and letting go

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Production of Indigenous Voices has been made possible through financial support from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and Health Canada. The views herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada or the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.



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