



THE COPING CENTRE

An Update for Our Supporters

In 2020 Coping Bereavement Support Groups of Ontario Inc. celebrated 30 years of supporting grieving families across Canada. From very small beginnings and gradual growth to presently operating in the beautiful surroundings of the Coping Centre in Cambridge.

2020 certainly brought challenges for all of us. Our lives as we knew it changed, but one thing that didn't change was families needing support for the loss of loved ones. The Coping Centre continued to support those families in every way that was possible under the pandemic safety guidelines.

The groups that were scheduled to start in the Spring had to be all cancelled so we continued to keep in contact and help them with all the resources we could offer. So many told us how the pandemic had left them feeling alone and isolated and were so grateful for our connecting with them. We sent books, kept in contact by phone and emails, and made referrals for one on one virtual counselling when needed.

Whatever the need, we did our utmost to address it the very best we could under the circumstances.

We were able to run a limited number of groups this Fall for those who had been waiting since the spring.

Of course, there were many things that had to be put in place to run Covid safe groups. Protocols and procedures were put in place to make sure everyone was safe. I think this quote received from one of the participants expresses this well, "I felt very safe, you have all done a wonderful job taking every precaution to make people feel safe and give them a space where they can begin to cope." The participants were so grateful to finally be able to meet others who had lost even if it was with masks and all the guidelines. At the Coping Centre, we fortunately had two rooms large enough to be able to put all safeguards in place plus a beautiful setting in the garden for an afternoon group.

In keeping with the Government directives we were unable to run the Adventure Camp for Grieving Children this year. This is such a special and unique experience for kids and teens. We are certainly hopeful that Summer 2021 will be a different story and we can once again welcome them to camp.

We have continued to reach out to the hockey world by working with Youth Mental Health specialists in developing a virtual skill-based training to assist players on the 22 teams of the OJHL. This program assists young players in dealing with the multitude of mental health issues that has risen to the surface in the Covid-19 pandemic. This assists them in knowing how to process these challenges and supplies resources for them when they feel they need help.

The Christmas Remembrance evenings have been modified but we are so pleased that families are still able to come and remember those they have lost. It is all done outdoors observing the numbers allowed. It can be such a difficult time for many but with a little creativity, we are still able to create a safe place for them to come and acknowledge their loss and express it outwardly by placing an ornament on the Christmas trees in the backyard of the Coping Centre. We gave each family an ornament in memory of their loved one to take home along with a booklet setting out some strategies to help them through the holidays. Over 350 people attended over 9 evenings. These numbers certainly show that this ceremony fulfills a need for grieving families.

The pandemic has caused complicated grief for many. Those who have lost were not able to be there at the time of death and funeral services or memorials were very different to what we are all used to attending. Support around the time of loss is so important in the process of grief and the pandemic has certainly stolen that support away from so many grieving families.

We are ready to continue to extend compassion to those who contact the Coping Centre in 2021 and once again do our very best to meet each individual need.

Many of our fundraisers had to be cancelled because of Covid 19 so we are deeply grateful for all of those who supported the Coping Centre mission to continue to offer all our programs at no cost.

All at the Coping Centre look forward to the privilege of supporting grieving kids, teens and adults the best we can within the pandemic guidelines.

Glenn and Roslyn