

WELCOME TO


# Grief Matters

## In this month's March newsletter:

- **Meet our new board members and chair** – Find out more about our new trustees and Sumita Paul's transition into the role of Board Chair
- **Drop-in Grief Group** – A space for connection and support
- **New A5 resource** – Providing guidance through loss
- **Thank you, Good Bitches Baking** – Spreading kindness one treat at a time
- **The journey of grief** – Understanding and navigating loss
- **Important dates** – Keep up to date with what's happening
- **Thank you to our funders** – Acknowledging those who make our work possible

We appreciate each and every one of you who make up our Grief Centre community. Whether you're here for support, offering it to others, or simply walking alongside us, you are an important part of the work we do.

Ngā mihi nui,  
The Grief Centre Team ❤️



“Hold me, hug me, try to find  
some words.  
Some words of comfort, words  
of belonging, for that would  
help ease my mind.  
I know there are no words that  
feel right, but I appreciate your  
courage to say something  
despite.”

Emma Walker

# Meet our new board members & chair

This year brings an important transition for the Grief Centre. We acknowledge the incredible contributions of Stephen Dil, our co-founder, long-standing trustee, and former board chair, who officially stepped down from the board on 31 December 2024. While we will miss his strategic and business expertise, we are pleased that he will remain part of the Grief Centre whānau as a Special Adviser.

## *Sumita Paul*



We are delighted to announce that Sumita Paul, who has been a trustee since 2017, has stepped into the role of Chair of the Board. Sumita brings a strong background in fiduciary services and financial planning, along with a deep passion for community support and governance. With her experience and commitment to our mission, we look forward to her leadership as we continue to support those navigating loss.

This year, we welcome three new trustees who bring diverse experience and governance expertise to our board, joining our continuing trustees Maureen Frayling, Margaret Agee, and Monica Briggs.

## *Wade Downey*



With over 34 years in the funeral services industry, Wade is the Auckland Group General Manager at Dil's Funeral Services and has held key governance roles with FDANZ and NZEA.

## *Dr. Jane Skeen, MNZM*



A retired Paediatric Oncologist, Dr. Skeen has dedicated her career to paediatric palliative care and has served on multiple charitable boards, including the Child Cancer Foundation.

## *Renny Hayes*



Renny is a governance professional with experience in not-for-profits such as Make-A-Wish and SPCA and is currently a director at Mt Tabor Trust.

We are excited to welcome Wade, Jane, and Renny to our board and to have Sumita step into the role of Board Chair. We look forward to the valuable insights they bring to the Grief Centre. To learn more about our board, visit [our website](#).

# Drop-in Grief Group

## A SPACE TO SHARE AND CONNECT

Our free weekly drop-in grief group offers a safe and supportive space for anyone navigating loss. Thanks to funding from COGS, we're able to offer this support for free.

Held every Wednesday from 10:30am to 12:00pm at our Birkenhead Community Hub (97 Birkenhead Avenue, Auckland), the group provides an opportunity to connect with others who understand the journey of grief. Our caring facilitators are there to listen, guide conversations, and offer support.

While there's no need to register, we do ask that you arrive on time, as the session begins at 10:30am. Our hub is wheelchair-accessible with off-street parking and nearby public transport.

Whether you're grieving the loss of a loved one, a relationship, or another life change, you're welcome to join.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at [admin@griefcentre.org.nz](mailto:admin@griefcentre.org.nz) or call 0800 331 333.



Jan Morrison, Facilitator



Birkenhead Community Hub

*"I have fully enjoyed this group and taken a lot from it! I have recommended it to many people who are grieving"*

*"I thought the Group yesterday was great and that everybody could really relate to each other in some way"*



# New A5 resources

## HELPING MORE PEOPLE THROUGH GRIEF

Thanks to the generous support of Constellation Communities Trust, our Living Through Loss and Grief booklet is now available in a larger A5 format. This popular resource provides tangible support that you can revisit whenever you need. It is available online or from our Birkenhead office, offering guidance and reassurance during difficult times.

Our clients have shared how valuable this booklet has been: *“It was lovely to receive and read through,”* one person told us. Another shared, *“After losing Mum, the resources helped me have conversations with my dad that wouldn’t have happened otherwise.”* Others have found it *“really, really helpful, offering advice and encouragement—just what I needed.”*

If you or someone you know could benefit from this resource, pop into the office or order online [here](#).

## *What our clients say*

*“I wouldn’t have been able to cope without the Grief Centre and after talking with a friend, who has also needed the Grief Centre, we are both of the same opinion. Death of a loved one is so very hard and it’s great to know that this service is available. I can only praise my counsellor and am thankful that this opportunity arose. Thank you.”*

*Feedback received in February from a Counselling Client*

*Thank You*

## **Good Bitches Baking**

For the past few years, Good Bitches Baking have been dropping off fresh baking to our office every week. Their kindness and generosity have helped make our office a warmer, more welcoming space.

It’s more than just the baking—it’s the thoughtfulness behind it that makes a difference. We truly appreciate their ongoing support and the care they bring to our community. Thank you for all that you do!



# The journey of grief

Grief is the outcome of loving and losing someone in life. It is a common human experience. While we can talk about the reactions others may experience when they are grieving, in truth it is a very personal and individual experience.

You may find yourself experiencing extremes of feelings, thoughts, and behaviours that you haven't felt before, often described as like being on a roller coaster or caught in a huge wave.

With support, you will grieve in your own time and in your own way. You may not get over your grief but, even though it may seem impossible to imagine in the beginning, you will grow around it.

The grief journey is about re-learning to live in the world without your loved one.

## Important dates

### *Community Support*

- **Free Grief Group:** 10.30am-12pm weekly Wednesday drop-in group at 97 Birkenhead Avenue
- 31 March 10am: **Monday walking group Birkenhead** (Check our Facebook page for updates)

### *Professional Development Courses (Live Webinars)*

- 18 Mar 1pm: **Assisted Dying** - Supporting people through their journeys and grief
- 25 Mar 1pm: **Tangihanga** - A Māori perspective on loss and grief
- 29 Apr 1pm: **Supporting through pregnancy and baby loss** - Crafting therapeutic conversations with mothers, partners and children
- 15 Apr 1pm: **Coercive control in the context of family violence** - Understanding grief and trauma

# Thank you to our recent funders



**LISTER PRESBYTERIAN**  
Health Trust

*Grief Centre thanks*

**Lister Presbyterian Health Trust**  
*For supporting us over the past 6 months with subsidised counselling*

*"The sessions have been invaluable in helping me understand why I am feeling how I feel and in giving me ideas / tools to address the worst moments."*



**COGS**  
Community Organisation Grants Scheme

**THANK YOU**  
**COGS**

**Grief Centre**  
support • education

MANUKAU, RODNEY AND NORTH SHORE, WHANGAREI, WAITAKERE

With your support over the past year, we have:

- ♥ Held 2 Bereavement Support Groups
- ♥ Hosted 6 drop-in Grief Group sessions
- ♥ Provided 100 subsidised counselling sessions

*Thank you for helping us support those navigating loss.*



## NOMINATE GRIEF CENTRE!

The Nespresso Care For You Fund could help us provide more subsidised counselling for those navigating loss and grief.

Please take a moment to nominate us (Grief Support & Education Charitable Trust) and help make mental health support more accessible.

Every nomination counts!

[Nominate](#)

*Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, funding partners and supporters who provide the Grief Centre with funding and other resources to ensure we can support New Zealand communities living through loss.*



## Contact and Alternative Support Numbers

### Counselling, Support Groups & General Enquiries

Phone: 09 418 1457  
Freephone: 0800 331 333  
Email: [admin@griefcentre.org.nz](mailto:admin@griefcentre.org.nz)

Physical Address:  
97 Birkenhead Avenue  
Birkenhead Auckland 0626

Postal Address:  
PO Box 34548  
Birkenhead Auckland 0746

Charities Registration Number CC38713

### Grief Centre is not a crisis service.

Other assistance and support available includes:

Lifeline (24/7 free helpline) 0800 LIFELINE (5433 5463)  
Text to talk 1737 (free phone counselling)  
Youthline 0800 376 633  
Suicide Crisis Helpline 0508 828865

If you have serious concerns about a person's immediate safety (or your own) please call: 111

Te Whatu Ora's Urgent Response Team (numbers vary around New Zealand, in Auckland it is 0800 800 717)

