

## WELCOME TO Grief Matters

**Nau mai, haere mai ki tā mātou pānui – Welcome to our newsletter**

As we welcome the season of Matariki, we enter a time for remembrance, celebrating the present and looking to the future. In this edition, we reflect on the ways Matariki honours those we've lost, supports us in our grief, and offers gentle light toward renewal and connection.

### **In this month's newsletter**

- A word from our new CEO
- Honouring memories and finding light — Matariki at Grief Centre
- Grief in the body: Understanding physical responses to loss
- Events and important dates from Grief Centre and our friends
- Thank you to our funders
- Our 23/24 annual report

Ngā mihi nui,  
The Grief Centre Team 

*E tū Pōhutukawa  
Tē kaikawe i ngā mate o te tau  
Ruiruia ngā mate ki te uma o Ranginui  
Anā! Kua whetūrangihia koutou*

*Behold Pōhutukawa  
Who carries the dead of the year  
Scatter their spirits into the cosmos  
You have now become stars*

### *What our clients say*

*"Each time I have attended I have felt safe to open up and share my very personal experiences. It is what a lot of people need (community in grief) yet there isn't much around/available"*

*Feedback received in May from a counselling client*

# A word from our new CEO - Rajal Middleton



Mānawatia a Matariki,

It's a privilege to write to you for the first time as the new Chief Executive of The Grief Centre. I'm honoured to join an organisation that holds such deep meaning for so many—a place where compassion, connection, and hope are at the heart of everything we do. How timely to be reaching out to you during the celebration of Matariki - where we honour those we have lost, celebrate the present and look to the future.

Like many of you, my understanding of grief is personal. In a single year, I lost my father and four other beloved family members. That season of loss reshaped me. It deepened my empathy and strengthened my belief in the need for spaces like ours—where people can be heard, supported, and gently guided through some of life's most painful experiences.

The Grief Centre is more than a service provider. We are a community. Whether through counselling, group support, professional development or advocacy, our work honours the love behind the loss. I'm inspired by our team's dedication and look forward to building on the incredible legacy already in place.

To those navigating grief now—or supporting others who are—you are why we are here. Together, we'll continue to walk alongside people with care, dignity, and aroha.

Ngā mihi nui, Rajal Middleton



*We were honoured to welcome Rajal to Grief Centre with a mihi whakatau last month*

## What our clients say

*'Being able to talk with someone outside of your family/circle of friends provides a fresh perspective, allows you to open up without judgement or impacting on your close relationships and talking really does help'*

Feedback received in May from a counselling client

# Honouring memories and finding light — *Matariki at Grief Centre*

---

As the stars of Matariki rise and signal the Māori New Year, we are invited into a season of remembrance, renewal and connection. At Grief Centre, we honour this sacred time by holding space for reflection — for the memories of those we've lost, the emotions we carry, and the hope that gently emerges with each new beginning.

Matariki reminds us that grief is not just a personal experience — it is also shared. We begin by remembering under the stars, as our ancestors have done for generations. In te ao Māori, names of those who have died are spoken aloud and released into the sky. It is a powerful act of remembrance and reverence.

We are also reminded that grieving is something we do together. *Ka tangi tahi, ka maumahara tahi* — we cry together, we remember together. Matariki encourages us to gather, share stories, and lean on each other.

The star Pōhutukawa holds particular meaning during this time. It is known as the whetū (star) that connects us with those who have passed. As it rises, we are given the chance to acknowledge our grief, honour those who have passed, and feel their presence in the night sky - through remembering, we heal.

But Matariki is not only a time to look back. It is also a season of new beginnings. Just as crops are planted for the year ahead, we are invited to plant seeds of healing, growth and intention. Renewal can exist alongside sorrow.

This year's theme — *Matariki mā Puanga* — invites us to embrace inclusion, diversity and unity. Whoever we are, and however we grieve, there is a place for each of us beneath the stars. We can honour our differences while finding strength in shared humanity.

From all of us at Grief Centre, may this Matariki bring peace to your heart and light to your path.



Mānawatia  
a Matariki



# Grief in the body: Understanding physical responses to loss

A reminder this month that grief doesn't only affect our hearts and minds — it often makes itself known through the body. For many people, physical symptoms are an unexpected and unsettling part of navigating loss.

You might notice changes in appetite or digestion, trouble sleeping, overwhelming fatigue, or frequent headaches. Some people lose or gain weight, feel achy or tense, or find it harder to concentrate. These symptoms aren't "in your head" — they're real signals of your body responding to emotional pain.

Grief can be a full-body experience. Just as our minds try to make sense of loss, our bodies carry the weight of it too. Be gentle with yourself. Try to rest when you can, nourish yourself as best you're able, and know that it's okay to ask for support. With time, care, and connection, many of these symptoms ease.

If physical symptoms are severe or ongoing, consider speaking to your GP or a health professional — you don't have to manage grief alone.



JUL  
17

## Events and news from our friends

FREE EVENT



**Seeds of Hope: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025, 2.00 - 3.30pm, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch**

Public ceremonies to acknowledge the losses connected with infertility, pregnancy and baby loss. Created by celebrants to assist in the healing process and provide hope. Email [mdownercounsellor@gmail.com](mailto:mdownercounsellor@gmail.com) for more info.

JUL  
17

## Grief Centre events and important dates

### Community Support

- Wednesdays 10.30 - 12pm - **Free Grief Group**. This weekly drop-in group meets at 97 Birkenhead Avenue
- Monday June 30<sup>th</sup> at 10am - **Monthly walking group, Birkenhead**. This month the group is meeting at the Takapuna Cricket Club.
- Friday June 20<sup>th</sup> - **Matariki**

### Professional Development

- See our website for details

# Thank you to our recent funders



Thank  
You



With your help we can run 16 weekly drop-in Grief Groups ♥

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

## How you can help

If you'd like to support Grief Centre and make a meaningful impact in someone's life, there are a few ways to contribute:

- ♥ Click here to make a one-off or regular donation via our website.
- ♥ Click here to become a sponsorship partner.
- ♥ Click here to leave a gift in your will.

We appreciate any donation to support those going through loss and grief.

*Thank you for making a difference!*



**Grief  
Centre**  
support + education

Click here to view  
our  
**23/24**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

*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)

