

WELCOME TO Grief Matters

Nau mai, haere mai, welcome to the Grief Centre August community newsletter.

If you have been trying to contact our Birkenhead office lately you may have noticed our response times are a little longer than usual. Please bear with us as we are experiencing a high demand.

In this month's newsletter

- Counsellor spotlight: Monica Barnett-Harris
- Being there: how to companion someone through grief
- Events and news from Grief Centre and our friends
- Thank you to our recent funders
- How you can help
- Contact and support numbers

Ngā mihi nui,
The Grief Centre Team 🧡

August quote

"We try to help people find a place where they can dance in the rain."
- Monica Barnett-Harris, Grief Centre Counsellor

What our clients say

"I really benefitted from talking to an experienced counsellor who shares my love of dogs and has had personal experience of loss of a loved pet. Some people just don't get that a pet is very much a family member and is loved and grieved like a fellow human. ...talking with [my counsellor] who was so kind and empathetic really helped me process the impending loss of my beloved dog."

Feedback received in May from a counselling client

Counsellor spotlight: Monica Barnett-Harris

How long have you been a counsellor, and what do you love most about this work?

I've been a counsellor for 24 years, and I've been with Grief Centre for the past 5.5 years. I feel it's an honour to be able to support people in their weakest moment, because we don't often allow people in. I always feel really honoured when someone, who's a total stranger, arrives at my door and honours me with a story that they might never have told anybody else and they trust me enough to hold that space for them, be there for them and support them. I don't think we have enough support in society, so it's nice to be able to offer that, so that the grief then becomes part of their story, but it doesn't own them.



What do you wish more people knew about the Grief Centre?

That we can offer more than just grief counselling. While grief and loss are still at our core, we also support people through a range of life experiences and provide ACC counselling. So if they feel safe with us and if they've bonded with a counsellor, then it's a lovely place for people to come back to. Even if they need support in other areas, we're here and All of our counsellors are very skilled to deal with various concerns.

What do you enjoy outside of work and how do you take care of yourself.

I've lived all over the world - South Africa, England, New Zealand, Australia.

I love travelling, I love different cultures, I travel as a hobby and its made me quite open to different cultural backgrounds and religious backgrounds because I believe we're all human ultimately. I've also taken up karate in the last 4.5 years, and I love that - I'm just me there, not a counsellor, and I arrive and can be in any mood I want and just move my body and it's a lovely way of venting. I also love the seaside, I dive, I snow ski and I enjoy spending time with fun, uplifting people, and just reminding myself that outside of counselling, the world still turns there are still sunrises and sunsets.

Do you have a favourite quote or idea you share with clients?

Yes, I often share the idea that "we try to help people find a place where they can dance in the rain." It resonates with a lot of clients - it's a gentle reminder that not everything is bad. There's still light, even when it feels hidden. I also like to remind people that the sun will always rise again in the morning, and it will always set again at night. Even when it feels like the world is crashing down, life keeps moving. It's okay to be exactly where you are in your journey - but it helps to remember that the world is still turning around you.

What our clients say

'I felt [my counsellor] was warm & receptive plus honouring of my story and feelings. That was very important for me.'

Feedback received in May from a counselling client

Being there: How we can companion someone through grief

When someone we love is grieving, it's natural to want to ease their pain or find the right words. But often, what helps most is simply being present—walking alongside them with compassion and without trying to fix or change their experience.

This is the heart of companioning, a concept developed by grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt. Companioning means offering support not as an expert, but as a fellow human being. It's about listening more than speaking, honouring silence, and creating a space where the person grieving feels safe to share - if and when they're ready.

You don't need to be a counsellor to be a companion. You can offer comfort by being patient, asking gentle questions, and allowing all feelings - without judgement or the need to "cheer them up." Sometimes it's simply sitting beside someone, bearing witness to their pain, that matters most.

Grief can be lonely. When we show up with humility, presence and care, we remind our loved ones that they are not alone - and that their loss is seen and held with love.



Events and news from our friends

Dying Matters Week: 01 - 07 September

Dying Matters Week is on across Aotearoa in September. This event is all about connecting people across the motu to start conversations in a safe space, learn from local experts and seek support to get affairs in order and navigate grief or loss.

Check out the extensive events schedule [here](#)



Grief Centre events and important dates

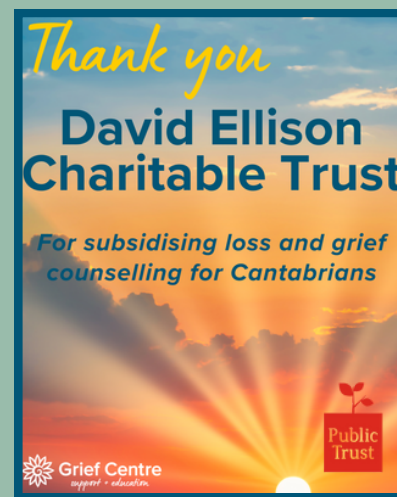
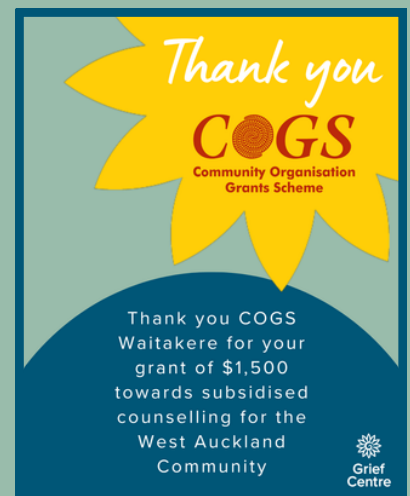
Community Support

- **Every Wednesday, 10.30am - 12pm - Free Grief Group.** This weekly drop-in group meets at 97 Birkenhead Avenue, Birkenhead, Auckland. No registration needed.
- **Monday 25 August, 10am - Monthly walking group and coffee,** North Shore, Auckland. This month the group is meeting at the Lauderdale Road entrance to Eskdale Bush. Our walk will be followed by a coffee together. Newcomers welcome.

Professional Development

- See [our website](#) for details on upcoming webinars on 'Loss of intimate connection in aged care' and 'Grief literacy for youth'.

Many thanks to our recent funders



How you can help

Times are tough for many individuals and families in our community right now. 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!

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

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)

