



## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE – PRE-CONFERENCE

**No virtual sessions on Wednesday, September 24; only in-person registration available**

### Registration Opens – Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Conference Registration begins
8:00 PM – 9:00 PM	

### Pre-Conference – Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> – Morning

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM	Conference Registration
8:45 AM – 9:00 AM	Opening Remarks
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	<a href="#">Keynote: Althea Jones, Registered Midwife</a> <a href="#">Holding Space: Lessons from a Culturally Safe Midwifery Model for Bereavement Care</a>
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Comfort Break
10:30 AM – 11:25 AM	<b>Breakout Session A</b>
A01	Simulation: Communication Exercise (PART 1: Community/out-patient settings)
A02	Memory Making: Hand and Foot Moulds (hands-on practice)
A03	Sibling Grief
11:25 AM – 11:35 AM	Comfort Break
11:35AM – 12:30PM	<b>Breakout Session B</b>
B01	Simulation: Communication Exercise (PART 2: Community/out-patient)
B02	Community Connections: Enhancing Care Delivery in Perinatal Palliative Care
B03	Unspoken Grief: Screening of the short film “Things We Feel But Do Not Say” and Conversation with PAIL Network and Writer and Director, Lauren Grant

### Pre-Conference – Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> – Afternoon

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM	Lunch & Networking
1:15 PM – 2:15 PM	Stronger Together: Leadership and Building Supportive Care Systems
2:15 PM – 2:30 PM	Comfort Break
2:30 PM – 3:25 PM	<b>Breakout Sessions C</b>
C01	Simulation: Communication Exercise (PART 1: Hospital-based settings)
C02	Cultivating Compassion: Early Pregnancy Loss Provider Toolkit (hands-on)
C03	Community Think Tank: The Three Rs of Effective Volunteer Engagement
3:25 PM – 3:35 PM	Comfort Break
3:35 PM – 4:30 PM	<b>Breakout Sessions D</b>
D01	Simulation: Communication Exercise (PART 2: Hospital-based settings)
D02	Contemplative Spacemaking and its Application in Perinatal Bereavement Settings (Museum Walk)
D03	Creative Healing: An Expressive Arts Toolkit for Grief Journeys



## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE – CONFERENCE: DAY 1

**Bolded sessions will be offered virtually**

Day 1 – Thursday, September 25 <sup>th</sup> – Morning	
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Conference Registration, Breakfast, Exhibits, Posters
8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	<b>Opening Remarks</b>
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM	<a href="#"><u>Keynote: Françoise Mathieu, MED, RP</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The Edge of Compassion - Strategies to Care for Ourselves While Caring for Others</u></a>
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Comfort Break, Exhibits, Posters
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	<b>Breakout Session A</b>
A01	<b>Key Tools to Stay Grounded: Building your Essential Toolkit- Françoise Mathieu</b>
A02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Every Last One - compassionate care for patients and families experiencing pregnancy and infant loss at The Luke Commission in the Kingdom of Eswatini, Africa.</b></li> <li>ii. <b>Honoring Cultural, Spiritual, and Religious Responses to Pregnancy and Infant Loss: A Video Series by Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Network</b></li> </ul>
A03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Facing uncertainty with open minds and hearts: Caring for pregnancies with severe fetal cardiac conditions</li> <li>ii. Community Connections: Enhancing Care Delivery in Perinatal Palliative Care</li> <li>iii. Creating a Standard of Care for the Periviable infant: Guidance for Health Care Practitioners supporting families who choose comfort care for their infants born at the edge of viability</li> </ul>
A04	Examining Mementoes-Based Support following Perinatal Loss: Perspectives from Care Recipients and Health Care Providers

Day 1 – Thursday, September 25 <sup>th</sup> – Afternoon	
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Lunch, Exhibits, Posters
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM	<b>Breakout Sessions B</b>
B01	<b>Key Tools to Stay Grounded: Building your Essential Toolkit- Françoise Mathieu</b>
B02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Measuring What Matters: Strengthening Bereavement Programs through Evaluation</b></li> <li>ii. <b>IWK Health Centre Bereavement Follow-Up Program</b></li> </ul>
B03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. CuddleCots: Bridging Comfort and Care for Grieving Families and Clinicians</li> <li>ii. Finding our voices: Stillbirth Happens - let's talk podcast</li> </ul>
B04	Panel: Confronting the Gaps in Grief Care After Abortion
2:30 PM – 2:35 PM	Changeover / Room Transition Break

Day 1 – Thursday, September 25 <sup>th</sup> – Afternoon (cont'd)	
2:35 PM – 3:05 PM	<b>Breakout Sessions C (30 minute)</b>
C01	<b>The University of Utah Stillbirth Center of Excellence: Why, what, and how it could be relevant to stillbirth quality of care in Canada</b>
C02	<b>Building Strong Relationships with Indigenous Communities: Supporting Pregnancy and Infant Loss through the PAIL Network</b>
C03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Compassion into Action: Advancing Education and Support for Pregnancy and Infant Loss</li> <li>ii. The Impact of an Educational Session on Perinatal Bereavement on the Understanding Bereavement Evaluation Tool (UBET) Scores of Second-Semester Baccalaureate Nursing Students</li> </ul>
C04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Building a compassionate framework for perinatal loss: Enhancing peer support, leadership, and routine care in the ED</li> <li>ii. Mount Sinai Fertility's Early Pregnancy Program: Enhancing Early Pregnancy Loss Care for Fertility Patients</li> </ul>
3:05 PM – 3:35 PM	Comfort Break, Exhibits, Posters
3:35 PM – 4:35 PM	<b>Breakout Sessions D</b>
D01	<b>Self Compassion for Helping Professionals</b>
D02	<b>Leading with Heart: Facilitating Grief Groups with Confidence and Care</b>
D03	Supporting Families After Perinatal Loss: A Multi-Disciplinary Community-Based Approach
D04	Love Beyond Words (Art Journal Building Workshop)



## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE – CONFERENCE: DAY 2

*Bolded sessions will be offered virtually*

Day 2 – Friday, September 26 <sup>th</sup> – Morning	
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Conference Registration, Breakfast, Exhibits, Posters
8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	<b>Opening Remarks</b>
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	<a href="#"><u>Keynote: Erin Gross, MTA, RP</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Building Playlists to Support the Grief Process: Using Music as a Tool for Healing After Loss</u></a>
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Comfort Break, Exhibits, Posters and Hotel Check Out
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	<b>Breakout Session A</b>
<b>A01</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>The Journey of Developing an Early Pregnancy Loss Clinic</b></li> <li>ii. <b>Cultivating Compassion: Early Pregnancy Loss (EPL) Provider Toolkit (hands-on)</b></li> </ul>
<b>A02</b>	<b>Grief Circles: Coping, Connection and Continuing Bonds</b>
A03	Navigating Queer Experiences of Perinatal Grief and Loss
A04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Grief Is Natural: Single Day Nature-Based Grief Retreats</li> <li>ii. Nature and Grief: A Retreat for Families Affected by SUID/SIDS Loss</li> </ul>

Day 2 – Friday, September 26 <sup>th</sup> – Afternoon	
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Lunch, Exhibits, Posters
1:30 PM – 2:30PM	<b>Breakout Sessions B</b>
<b>B01</b>	<b>Mapping the Journey: Co-Creating a Perinatal Palliative Care Pathway Together</b>
<b>B02</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Enhancing Volunteer Peer Support Programs: Foundations for Successful Volunteer Retention, Recognition, and Appreciation</b></li> <li>ii. <b>Sharing stories and supporting one another: creating a peer mentor training program for reproductive loss in British Columbia</b></li> </ul>
B03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Experiences of bereaved parents who have faced perinatal loss. A Qualitative Study</li> <li>iv. Resisting disenfranchised grief in the context of perinatal death: A qualitative study on the social labour of bereaved mothers</li> </ul>
B04	Panel: A Legacy of Love- Advocacy Through Commemorative Action
2:30 PM – 2:35 PM	Changeover / Room Transition Break



Day 2 – Friday, September 26 <sup>th</sup> – Afternoon (cont'd)	
2:35 PM – 3:05 PM	Breakout Sessions C (30 minute)
C01	Improving Early Pregnancy Loss Care in Ontario: Insights, Challenges, and Collaborative Solutions
C02	i. How Music Therapy Is Supporting End of Life Care in the Sunnybrook NICU ii. Continuing Bonds: Fostering Connection and Healing Through Art Therapy in Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support Groups
C03	Topic TBD
C04	i. Returning to work following a perinatal loss: when two worlds collide ii. Hiding in Plain Sight: A narrative review of non-parental relatives' perinatal grief
3:05 PM – 3:35 PM	Closing Remarks
3:35 PM – 4:40 PM	Comfort Break, Exhibits, Posters and Networking

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND SPECIAL GUEST OVERVIEW

Scroll down for a full bio and key note descriptions

### Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>

#### **Althea Jones, Registered Midwife**

Holding Space: Lessons from a Culturally Safe Midwifery Model for Bereavement Care

#### **PAIL Network and Lauren Grant, Writer and Director of “Things We Feel But Do Not Say”**

Unspoken Grief: A Screening and Conversation on the Things We Feel but Do Not Say

### Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

#### **Françoise Mathieu, MED, RP**

The Edge of Compassion - Strategies to Care for Ourselves While Caring for Others

### Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>

#### **Erin Gross, MTA, RP**

Building Playlists to Support the Grief Process: Using Music as a Tool for Healing After Loss



## KEY NOTE SPEAKERS AND SPECIAL GUEST

**Key Note Speaker: Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM (in person only)**

### **Althea Jones, Registered Midwife**

Althea Jones is a registered midwife with over 10 years of experience providing primary maternity and newborn care. For Althea, reproductive health is much more than a career, it's a passion and a calling that she has dedicated herself to. In 2021, Althea launched Ancestral Hands Midwives, a not-for-profit organization with a mission to improve the outcomes and experiences of Black people during the perinatal period. By focusing on education, access and empowerment, Ancestral Hands Midwives aims to make a positive impact on Black maternal health in Canada.

Additionally, Althea is very active in the midwifery community. She serves as the president of the Association of Ontario Midwives board of directors. Althea is dedicated to growing the profession as a mentor for BIPOC midwifery students and through community outreach. Althea not only hopes to see a midwifery profession that mirrors the diversity seen here in Ontario, but also wants to improve the retention of Black midwives.

Prior to completing her Bachelors of health science in Midwifery at Toronto Metropolitan University, Althea completed a biology degree at the University of Arizona where she attended on a soccer scholarship. As a former NCAA division one athlete, Althea is a strong supporter of women in sports. She truly believes that being an athlete has given her the skills and laid the foundation for her midwifery career and the advocacy work she does today.

**Title:** Holding Space: Lessons from a Culturally Safe Midwifery Model for Bereavement Care

**Description:** *Holding Space: Lessons from a Culturally Safe Midwifery Model for Bereavement Care* will explore how the care philosophy at Ancestral Hands Midwives offers practical and powerful lessons for supporting bereaved parents. Grounded in culturally safe, relationship-centered care, this keynote will highlight approaches to communication, compassion, and presence that honour both individual and collective experiences of loss. Attendees will gain insights into how midwifery-informed practices—shaped by trust, cultural humility, and deep listening—can enhance the ways health and service professionals support grieving families, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.



**Special Guest: Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:35 AM (in person only)**

**Lauren Grant, Writer and Director of “Things We Feel But Do Not Say”**

Clique Pictures is a vibrant film and television production company that focuses on working with female creative talent in front and behind the camera. Owned by award-winning filmmaker Lauren Grant, the company is based in Toronto, Canada. Her directorial debut short film *Things We Feel but Do Not Say* screened at festivals in North America before premiering on CBC in 2022. Her latest short film *Erase & Rewind* is based on the short story by Meghan Bell, won the Golden Sheaf Mental Health award at the Yorkton Film Festival.

She won a Canadian Screen Award for the short documentary *Take a Walk on the Wildside* and a Genie award for *Savage*. The Hollywood Reporter named Lauren one of 15 Talents to Watch, and she is an alumna of ACE Producers, Trans-Atlantic Partners, Rotterdam Lab, Berlinale Talent Campus, and TIFF Studio.

**Title:** Unspoken Grief: A Screening and Conversation on the Things We Feel but Do Not Say

Join PAIL Network and Writer and Director, Lauren Grant, for an intimate screening and discussion around the things we feel but do not say. Practice writing your own version of your lived experience for different audiences – family, friends, your colleagues – and feel empowered by being surrounded by a compassionate group of people who understand the isolation and silent grief that comes with pregnancy and infant loss.

**DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT**

1 in 4 women will have a miscarriage. That makes it sound common, frequent, statistical, but that isn’t how it feels when it happens to you. The experience is intimate, personal and heartbreaking. *Things We Feel But Do Not Say* is based on my experience with having two miscarriages before the birth of my daughter. Like so many women, I kept this private and shared with only a few close friends and some family. It weighed heavy on my heart for so long - long past what the outside world seemed to accept as a grieving period.

I wanted to make a film that captures this private grief and isolation. A time when your own body doesn’t feel like a friend and even those closest to you are at a loss of how to help. I also wanted to capture how grief affects both partners – and it is easy to be so lost in your sorrow that you can miss it. I wrote the film in January 2020. Since then, the world has been facing a collective grief with loss of loved ones, stability, connection. Many suffer and struggle in silence, but through this collective grief, I’ve seen more and more people speak out on their losses of all kinds – including miscarriage and infant loss. I hope we take away from this time that we need our support systems, our community, our village to get through grief.



## Key Note Speaker: Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM (in person and virtual)

### **Françoise Mathieu, MED, RP**

Françoise Mathieu is the Executive Director of TEND, an organization dedicated to providing education and consulting on secondary traumatic stress, burnout, moral distress, and organizational health. A Registered Psychotherapist and sought after speaker, Françoise is widely recognized as a leading subject matter expert in high-stress, trauma-exposed environments.

Before founding TEND, Françoise worked extensively in crisis intervention and mental health support with frontline professionals, including military personnel, health care teams, law enforcement, and community-based clinicians. Her career has included in-depth work with individuals affected by trauma and grief, and she has presented widely to health care organizations, including Mount Sinai Hospital, SickKids, Sunnybrook, Unity Health, St. Jude's, and Victoria General Hospital.

Françoise's work focuses on sustaining those who care for others—bereaved families, peer supporters, and professionals alike—using evidence-informed strategies that honour both compassion and boundaries.

**Title:** The Edge of Compassion - Strategies to Care for Ourselves While Caring for Others

**Abstract:** Repeated exposure to heartbreaking stories, limited resources, and competing demands can take a toll on our capacity to stay present and compassionate. Over time, we may feel ourselves becoming numb, distant, or, on the other end of the spectrum, overwhelmed and emotionally depleted. How do we stay connected without becoming overwhelmed? How do we honour the depth of others' pain without losing ourselves in it?

Based on nearly 30 years of work in high-pressure, trauma-exposed environments, Françoise will share practical strategies to maintain a steady presence in the face of grief and loss, and how to return to a healthy baseline after difficult conversations and experiences - without shutting down or becoming overextended.



**Key Note Speaker: Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM (in person and virtual)**

**Erin Gross, MTA, RP**

Erin Gross is a certified Music Therapist (MTA) and Registered Psychotherapist (RP) with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario. She has been practicing music therapy for 20 years, and has been part of the Creative Arts Therapies team at Sunnybrook since 2010.

She is the Professional Practice and Education Leader of Creative Arts Therapies at Sunnybrook, as well as a manager in the Odette Cancer Centre. She is also a PAIL volunteer, based on her experiences as a mom to Kiera, who died in 2014 at 20 days old.

**Title:** Building Playlists to Support the Grief Process: Using Music as a Tool for Healing After Loss

**Abstract:** Each individual's journey after pregnancy and infant loss is highly personal and unique to them. Music can be an effective tool for reflecting, processing and releasing emotions, particularly because it is also highly personal and unique to the individual.

This presentation will discuss the benefits of using music in exploring emotions, particularly through the context of building meaningful playlists. Participants will engage in exercises to begin to build personal playlists in honour of their babies, as well as learn techniques for how they can offer playlists as a tool for families that they are supporting.