

# NATIONAL REPRODUCTIVE AND PERINATAL LOSS THINK TANK

## SUMMARY REPORT

On June 11, 2025, over 100 participants from across Canada gathered virtually for the National Think Tank on Reproductive and Infant Loss. This initiative brought together healthcare providers, researchers, grief care advocates, people with lived experience, and community leaders to examine the current gaps and possibilities across systems related to pregnancy loss, infant death, and perinatal palliative care. This Think Tank was convened with the overarching goals of supporting national collaboration, knowledge sharing, and co-creation of solutions that are informed by lived experience, compassion, and grounded in practice.

### KEY THEMES & INSIGHTS

Participants identified what a family experiencing loss may be thinking and feeling at each stage, and what their care and support needs may be.

STAGE	THINKING AND FEELING	CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS
EARLY PREGNANCY	fear, anxiety, excitement, cautious optimism	validation, counselling, peer support, reassurance
DIAGNOSIS	anger, shock, devastation, sadness	empathy, time to process, clear communication, support
DECISION MAKING	grief and love intertwined, resilience	tailored planning, mental health, peer connection
LABOUR, BIRTH, AND DEATH	deep love, grief, moments of joy	compassionate care, unhurried time, recognition
IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH	overwhelming grief, disbelief	space to say goodbye, funeral support
LIFE AFTER LOSS	grief, isolation, guilt, ongoing adjustment	long-term grief support, remembrance opportunities

## WHAT'S WORKING WELL? WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE?

Participants shared perspectives from their lived experiences, professional roles, and geographic areas in breakout rooms. The discussions were centred around three main areas: **Care, Literacy and Capacity, Resources and Services.**

### CARE

- ✓ Peer and hybrid support models are increasing.
- ⚠ Gaps in early pregnancy loss clinics, Indigenous-led services, and rural access.
- 🔧 Families want time, space, and continuity in care.

### LITERACY AND CAPACITY

- ✓ E-learning and trauma-informed care options are expanding.
- ⚠ Gaps around regional inconsistencies in staff training and access persist.
- 🔧 Need for culturally safe, grief-informed education across all roles.

### RESOURCES AND SERVICES

- ✓ Compassionate care initiatives are growing (e.g., PAIL workshops).
- ⚠ Gaps include early intervention, consistent education, and inclusive grief policies.
- 🔧 Families seek validation, presence, and culturally affirming support.

## NEXT STEPS



Continued engagement and consultation to ensure representation across the country



National environmental scan to document current state of care and support available



Offer a quarterly community of practice to allow for connection, networking, and resource sharing

Together, we are building a more compassionate and connected future for reproductive and perinatal loss care, and perinatal palliative care in Canada.

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