



Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support

Backgrounder

Threads of Life brings hope and healing to Canadian families who have been affected by a workplace fatality, life-altering injury or occupational disease. It is a national charity connecting more than 3,900 family members through one-on-one peer support, links to community support services, and the opportunity to take action to help prevent similar tragedies to other families.

The organization was created in 2003 to fill a major gap in Canada's health and safety and social systems. There was no "helpline" to call or place to go to find the kind of emotional support and caring often required to make it through the aftermath of a workplace fatality or severe injury/illness.

The long-term emotional, societal, and financial consequences of this gap are enormous and evident. These consequences include psychiatric problems, stress-related physical health problems, substance abuse, family stress, marital breakdown, suicide, loss of productivity, loss of personal income, increased social welfare costs, and more. This is a substantial and costly burden for every citizen and taxpayer, but one that can be significantly reduced.

Threads of Life is a place where people can turn to help find the "cure" for workplace tragedy, which can only be accomplished through prevention.

MISSION

Our mission is to help families heal through a community of support and to promote the elimination of life-altering workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths.

VISION

Threads of Life will lead and inspire a culture shift as a result of which work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths are morally, socially and economically unacceptable.

WHAT WE DO

Threads of Life provides families with one-on-one peer support, group networking, links to community agencies and the opportunity to promote public awareness and accountability for workplace health and safety. The organization creates a network of support through volunteers from across the country who have been personally touched by a workplace tragedy.

CURRENT SERVICES:

1. Family Support

- Personal and sustained interaction with a trained peer called a Volunteer Family Guide, to facilitate a sharing of experiences. Family Guides have also lived through a workplace tragedy.

- Annual in-person events are an opportunity for families and workers to meet, create communities of support, and learn skills to cope with grief and change in healthy ways.
- Resources to help people understand grieving or traumatic emotional processes and experiences.
- Online workshops offer a chance to learn healthy coping skills, alongside others who've been through a similar experience.

2. Partnerships

- Provides families with answers to procedural and administrative questions about investigations, inquests and compensation.
- Connects health and safety-minded companies and organizations with opportunities to support families, promote safety and act on their commitment.

3. Community Action

- Through the Threads of Life Speakers' Bureau volunteers are trained to offer personal testimony on the impact of workplace injuries, fatalities or occupational disease in their lives. Volunteer speakers share their presentations at conferences, health and safety events and community events.

- **Steps for Life – Walking for Families of Workplace Tragedy (www.stepsforlife.ca)**, a 5K awareness and fundraising walk, with options for both in-person community- events and corporate or personal participation. Steps for Life creates awareness of the importance of workplace health and safety, and illustrates the personal impact of a workplace tragedy.

Steps for Life coincides with National Safety and Health Week in the spring. In 2024, Steps for Life will take place across Canada on the May 3-4 weekend (in most communities).

Participants will help raise awareness of workplace tragedy and its ripple effect on families, workplaces and society, as well as fundraise for Threads of Life family support programs and services. Wherever we walk in 2024, #WeWalkTogether.

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