

**Soch Mental Health
RNFOO NIA Award Progress Report for
The Akaal South Asian Grief Support Group**

Soch Mental Health received \$14,600 from RNFOO to support the relaunch of the Akaal South Grief Support Group. The Akaal - South Asian Grief Support Group is a virtual 6 week, closed program that is being offered in English and Punjabi. In Punjabi, Akaal means timeless, immortal, non-temporal, and is a foundational element of our support group where we learn to grieve in a way that we keep our loved ones alive. Each group has been capped to 15 participants to maximize group engagement. Allocated funds from the NEA award has supported this program to restart in January 2022 and plan for scale up with multiple program offerings in a calendar year. Our goal this year is to deliver this program 5 times in the calendar year.

The funding from RNFOO has also allowed Soch Mental Health to develop a strategic financial plan for the sustainability of this program. In addition to the funds received by RNFOO, Soch Mental Health also secured a \$15,000/year sponsorship for two years (2022 and 2023) from Brampton Crematorium and Visitation Centre as well as launched a [community fundraiser](#) which has collected over \$5000 to date. Although we were unsuccessful with a City of Brampton grant for this program, we continue to explore other grant opportunities.

The Akaal South Asian Grief Support Program Goal:

The support group aims to provide the Punjabi community with a culturally and linguistically inclusive space to connect with other individuals who have experienced a loss while receiving emotional support, validation and education about grief.

The Akaal South Asian Grief Support Group Outcomes:

- An opportunity to explore, understand and work through feelings of grief.
- Application of practical strategies to manage grief based on socio-cultural norms and beliefs
- Emotional support in a culturally and linguistically inclusive space honoring SA values
- A decrease in feelings of isolation through a supportive network of other SA community members who are experiencing grief

We have been successful in delivering this program three times this year. The following is the breakdown of the three rounds of the Akaal South Asian Grief Support Program provided in 2022 thus far.

Program Timeline	Participants
January 25th to March 1st 2022	15
March 29th to May 3rd 2022	9
May 17th to June 21st	4
October 4th to Nov 8th	6

In addition to running the program, Soch Mental Health has also created social media material such as short videos and reels to market the program as well as educate the South Asian community about grief and the importance of seeking support. Soch Mental Health continues to actively market the program on ethnocultural media outlets (South Asian radio and TV outlets).

The following is some of the feedback we have received from the group thus far.

Please share how this group was helpful for your healing. **ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਨੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਦੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ |**

7 responses

Provided helpful suggestions to cope with grief and also very patiently led the group through various grief stages

It really put into perspective that there is a silent faction in the community that shares my personal perspective on grief. It also allowed for the opportunity to hear learn from others about their perspective on grief as well.

Providing a space to speak to member of my community who have suffered a loss and navigating through grief.

It was so helpful to hear about other people's experiences - sometimes you feel like you are the only person dealing with grief. I also felt a little lost before starting the group and I feel a little more anchored now.

The overall and varied experiences of participants widened the understanding of managing grief

A carved out time to sit and be with my grief is so necessary - the space that our support group held for thoughts, words, and feelings to exist was so helpful.

Please comment how your knowledge about grief and how to cope with grief has improved. ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਦੁੱਖ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਵਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਵਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ |

7 responses

From 0 to 10

It gave me hope that there is a light at the end of the "grief tunnel". It helped me feel less guilty about the ups and downs of the process, and less guilty about how I am handling this situation.

SOCH provided weekly follow up handouts with tools and resources.

There was so much important information provided - for me, seeing how grief may present in different age groups (e.g. children vs. seniors) was eye opening for me. I think knowing that grief is a process without an end has been helpful. It has taken pressure off feeling like I need to rush through to be "okay" again.

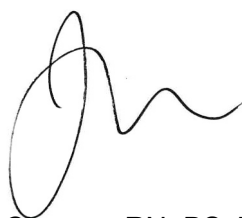
Just after four months of my loss I joined this group. Each week learned a lot from experiences of fellow participants and of course the expertise of our Hosts Maneet and Jasmeet - Thank you

Your gentle reminder that grief is love was really important - being in company with our group members reminded me about how personal grief journeys are, and that there truly is no wrong way through this...

Hearing other people's stories helped ease some of the pain and made me feel less alone

Although our plan was to deliver 2 more rounds of the group in the fall, due to financial limits we were only able to deliver one. With the \$15,000 sponsorship from Brampton Crematorium and Visitation Center for 2023 we already have 2 rounds of the program secured. Our organization is now revisiting the financial sustainability and growth of this program for 2023 through community donations, sponsorships, and grants.

Regards,



Jasmeet Chagger RN, BScN, MSc
Co-Founder



Maneet Chahal-Gill RN, BScN, MSc
Co-Founder