

STORIES OF CARE

Finding support, then offering it to others



After her husband died in July 2023, Patricia thought she could manage her grief on her own.

For months, she had cared for him at home, honouring his wish to spend his final days in the place they shared. After he died, the reality of the loss became harder to carry.

“I thought I could handle it,” Patricia said. “Most people think they can. But I realized I was really struggling.”

A member of her husband’s care team suggested she connect with Kemp Care Network for bereavement support. It took courage to make the first call, but Patricia was connected with Gabriele, KCN’s Adult Bereavement Support coordinator.

That first conversation made a difference.

“She was very welcoming, very warm, very kind, very understanding,” Patricia said. “It made me feel like what I was experiencing was okay. It was part of the grief journey.”

Patricia began with one-on-one bereavement support before Gabriele encouraged her to join a spousal loss group. At first, Patricia was hesitant. As someone who was used to caring for others, she worried she would focus on everyone else instead of herself.

But she decided to trust Gabriele’s guidance.

Over eight weeks, Patricia found herself sitting with others who understood the loss of a spouse in a way few people could. The group shared stories, emotions and experiences. Slowly, Patricia began to feel less alone.

“It’s not something you get over,” she said. “You keep going through it.”

Later, Patricia was invited to share her experience at KCN’s symposium on palliative care at home. Telling her story helped her feel validated in the choices she made for him and for their family.

Today, Patricia is giving back as a volunteer group facilitator with KCN’s spousal loss groups. Her own grief has not disappeared, but it has helped her support others with compassion and understanding.

“It makes me feel like I have a purpose, when I’m helping others,” she said.

For Patricia, bereavement support offered more than information or resources. It offered connection, trust and a place where grief could be spoken about openly.

Her message to others who may be unsure about reaching out is simple.

“You don’t have to go through it on your own.”

At Kemp Care Network, grief and bereavement support is offered at no cost to individuals and families in our community, helping people find support, connection and care when they need it most.