



# Professional End of Life Coaching Certificate

## Introduction

In British Columbia there are several programs offered to train individuals as end-of-life doulas, much of the training is facilitated by doulas already working in the field. Several colleges offer a death doula certificate, the length of training ranges from 5 days (in person) to 6 weeks (part-time online). These programs are basic essentials; however, they lack the depth of understanding, coaching, mentoring, and training that will be so important moving forward as our communities face an unprecedented death rate that our current systems are not currently equipped to deal with.

This robust program is designed to train and qualify students as Professional End of Life Coaches. An End-of-Life Coach is trained and certified to provide coaching to individuals, families, and groups in all aspects of end of life including all the duties performed by a death doula. Throughout the training students will develop and practice the eight core competencies as defined by the International Coaching Federation. Learners will understand the use of ethical guidelines, professional standards and learn how to create trusting and respectful coaching relationships as they open and close coach-client relationships.

## Program Rationale

What has become obvious during the COVID-19 pandemic is, as a province and a country, we are underprepared for an increase in the rate of death. The pandemic has shown us how quickly our systems of care are overwhelmed. Not intending to minimize the COVID-19 related deaths that totalled 3,002 in British Columbia, averaging 1,000 annually as at the end of September 2022 (BC Centre for Disease Control<sup>1</sup>). This was also reflected during the heat dome of 2021 when the sudden increase in unexpected deaths of 619 (BC Government News<sup>2</sup>), swamped the funeral industry's service capacity. On a national level these numbers were devastatingly higher.

Many hospices throughout the province and the country have reported a significant increase in the demand for their support, outstripping their ability to provide both professional and volunteer services in a timely fashion. The same holds true for local community service agencies who also have been pressed to meet the demands for evolving community services regarding end of life given the increase in drug overdoses and suicides, particularly amongst the youth.

Given our recent end of life experiences, and looking forward over the next decade or two, we have a generation of people, the baby boomers, who will be dying in numbers that will swamp those we experienced during the pandemic. With nearly one million adults over the age of sixty-five living in BC and 9.2 million boomers living in Canada

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID-19\\_Weekly\\_Report/COVID\\_weekly\\_report\\_09292022.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID-19_Weekly_Report/COVID_weekly_report_09292022.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2022PSSG0035-000911>



(Statistics Canada<sup>3</sup>) we can expect our ability to serve the needs of the dying and support those grieving to be stretched to the breaking point. BC's current provincial rate of death in 2021 was 42,380 individuals (Statista<sup>4</sup>) will more than double over the next decades eclipsing the increases we experienced during the pandemic.

Rhodes Wellness College has recognized the significant need for well-educated, well-trained professionals who will be required to meet the end of life needs of a rapidly ageing population. The college has also recognized that supporting and preparing families for an expected death in the family home will be essential for the inevitable increase in home deaths. Statistically there are 27,931 long-term care beds in the province along with 10,500 hospital beds and a mere 260 hospice beds (Office of the Seniors Advocate BC<sup>5</sup>). The existing capacity of beds for care of the elderly and the dying will be outstripped by the demand that one million baby boomers will bring to bear on the already fragile health care system.

Concurrently, it is recognized that community-based education programs focusing on neighbours helping neighbours at the end-of-life is paramount. The End-of-Life Coaching Program is designed with all of this in mind and is focused on providing trained End of Life Coaches to the community service agencies and hospice societies that provide residents with the much-needed support.

**Authors and Contributors:**

*This program was developed by:*

Reverend Stephen Garrett, MA Leadership, Grief Counsellor, and End of Life Coach  
Lead Program Developer for the End-of-Life Coaching Certificate, Rhodes Wellness College

*With Contributions by:*

Tova Payne, B.Sc. Psychology, Curriculum Specialist, Rhodes Wellness College

Benjamin Colling, MA Leadership, President, Rhodes Wellness College

Chelsea Lee, MM Management, Director of Education, Rhodes Wellness College

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021003/98-200-X2021003-eng.cfm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/568046/number-of-deaths-in-british-columbia-canada/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/2021/12/LTCD2021-Summary.pdf>



## **PROGRAM OUTLINE:**

**Program Title: Professional End of Life Coaching Program**

**Program Duration: 19 weeks (115 hours)**

**Practicum Type: Self-Directed, (20 hours)**

**Program Type: Career Training/Academic**

**Career Occupation: Professional End of Life Coach**

**Admission Requirements: Successful completion of admission process**

**Prerequisite: Completion of Coaching Core Competencies (60 hours)**

### **Program Description**

The End-of-Life Coaching Program will develop foundational skills, provide essential coaching tools, and will support the professional development of each student. This program will be both practical and experiential as well as personally transformative.

Throughout this program the following foundational skills will be practiced and developed: presence, active listening, empathy and creating trust. Students will also learn how to build session structure, create powerful questions, give, and receive feedback—all in alignment with ethics and professional standards. Learners will learn how to effectively apply emotional intelligence and apply it to goal setting, problem solving, and action planning. They will learn how to use metaphor, analogy, intuition, and humour as they support their client in dealing with and understanding their values and beliefs regarding end of life. Additionally, students will learn how to be and demonstrate self-responsible language, how to be a life-long learner, how to take care of self, and they will practice delivering coaching session focused on end-of-life issues.

This program begins by exploring one's personal approach and beliefs of dying, death, grief, and loss in order to understand the impact their unique perspective could have on the individuals and community groups they will be serving. Throughout the training learners will regularly confront their own fears of death and dying thereby learning firsthand how to navigate the uncomfortable feelings and difficult conversations. In doing so they will be deeply attuned and have a refined ability to support individuals and community members facing similar challenges.

Students will also learn and practice all the logistical issues in attending to end-of-life such as writing a will and making necessary preparations. Only 51% of all Canadians have an up to date will, the bare minimum, leaving such issues as, banking and finances, advanced care directives, end of life wishes, and funeral arrangements up in the air for others who, in the midst of their own grief, will need to make many complex decisions very quickly. This lack of preparation often results in poor choices that some folks find they regret in hindsight. Therefore, these logistical aspects are also integral to the program so that graduates can support others to attend to these necessary aspects of end-of-life planning and care.



Students will also practice leading workshops and facilitating groups thus developing leadership skills necessary to work with community members in groups, support groups, and in workshop settings.

Students completing this program will have the confidence and skills to coach community members through the many challenges we all face when end of life comes knocking. Having completed their own preparation for death and faced their own mortality, graduates will provide for their clients the certainty that end of life can be well planned, much more graceful, and self-directed than they may have believed possible.

### **Program Learning Objectives**

This program provides comprehensive training in personal and group coaching with the specialized focus on end-of-life care. The curriculum promotes individual reflection and self-care within the topics of death, dying, grief and loss so that learners can support others to navigate through the cycle of life. Upon completion, students will be qualified to provide end-of-life coaching, facilitate bereavement groups, host educational workshops, conduct intake interviews, maintain case files, session notes, and provide end of life coaching.

Graduates will be qualified to register with the International Coaching Federation (ICF) working towards their credentials as an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) and as a Professional Certified Coach (PCC). They will also be recognized as Certified End of Life Coaches from Rhodes Wellness College.

1. Explain and demonstrate core competencies of an end-of-life coach
2. Teach the concepts of pre-grief, grief, and loss support to others
3. Create a caring environment for difficult conversations
4. Apply the whole person model of end-of-life care
5. Teach end of life planning and preparation
6. Support others in the development of their own spiritual end of life practice
7. Create a toolkit of self-care techniques for self and others
8. Recognize the signs of caregiver burnout
9. Lead death cafes, grief support groups, and end of life planning workshops
10. Train families in sitting a vigil
11. Teach what death can look like
12. Explain the steps to get a family home ready for a home death
13. Facilitate the creation of meaningful family rituals
14. Coaching others in the seven languages of sorrow
15. Provide individual support for prolonged grief disorder
16. Coach others through difficult deaths
17. Teach families how to involve their children in the end-of-life process
18. Coach others on how to have a conversation with a neighbor or acquaintance who has experienced the death of a loved one
19. Able to advocate for clients dealing with the healthcare system
20. Coach others to recognize the meaning and legacy of their lives
21. Creating enduring relationship with the deceased



### **Program Format**

The program will feature a variety of teaching methods and techniques designed to satisfy the unique learning styles and the creative skill set required for meeting the demands that an End-of-Life Coach will face in the very real world of dying and death. The class size is limited affording ample time and space for individual feedback and personalized support.

Teaching tools will include and not be limited to:

1. Lectures
2. Readings
3. Videos
4. Discussion Groups
5. Group feedback
6. Role Plays
7. Demonstrations
8. Writing and Reflection
9. Journaling

### **Program Readings**

A variety of materials including e-books, articles, readings, course notes, and other resources will be utilized to support each course. Specific suggestions are detailed below.

#### **Suggested Reading List**

Author Joanne Cacciatore, PHD  
Grieving IS Loving

Author Frances Weller  
The Wild Edge of Sorrow

Author Sandy Oshiro Rosen  
Bare – The Misplaced Art of Grieving and Dancing

Author Kathryn Mannix  
With the End in Mind

Author Sushila Blackman  
Graceful Exits

Author Richard Morgan  
Conversations When Death is Near

Author Allen Wolfelt, PhD  
Understanding Your Grief After A Drug Overdose Death

Author Tom Zuba  
Permission to Mourn



Author Lama Shenpen Hookham  
There's More to Dying than Death

Author Glenn Ringtved (Children's Book)  
Cry Heart But Never Break

Author Jan Thornhill (Children's Book)  
I Found A Dead Bird

### **Program Evaluation and Completion Requirements**

The course evaluation methods meet the course objectives and are designed to coincide with the various learning styles of the students. The methods of evaluation to assess student performance include:

- Participation & Professionalism
- Presentations
- Written assignments
- Session Notes
- Essay(s)
- Skills Demonstrations
- Written Exam

Based on the above evaluations, students will receive a grade according to the following scale:

A+	95% or more	C+	65-69
A	90-94	C	60-64
A-	85-89	C-	55-59
B+	80-84	P	50-54*
B	75-79	NC	0-49**
B-	70-74		

\*P = Pass

\*\*NC = Not Complete (course completion credit will not be granted)

### **Completion Requirements:**

- Students must fulfill the college's [Assignment Completion Policy](#) in order to complete this course.
- Students must meet the college's [Attendance Policy](#) to complete this course.



## **Program Organization, Hours, and Flow**

### **Part One: EOLC 100, Personal End of Life Planning and Self Care**

#### **9 weeks (54 hours)**

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

- Build a self-care plan throughout the program
- Create a self-care planning journal based on one's journey of the self-care practices that supported them through challenging times
- Educate others on self-care techniques
- Discuss what an All-Ready-to-Go binder is
- Create and update their personal All-Ready-to-Go binder
- Use the All-Ready-to-Go binder as a tool to develop self-awareness for clients
- Identify the scope of both primary and secondary losses

### **Part Two: EOLC 101, The Reality of Death and Dying**

#### **4 Weeks (24 hours)**

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

- Review the models and theories of the grief process
- Explain the concepts of pre-grief, grief, and loss to others
- Create a caring environment for difficult conversations
- Apply the whole person model to end of life care
- Support others in the development of their own spiritual end of life practices
- Discuss with others what death can look like
- Coach and support others through difficult deaths
- Outline the types of grief experienced by others
- Coach others in the Seven Languages of Sorrow
- Train families in sitting vigil
- Facilitate the creation of meaningful family rituals
- Support others to recognize meaning making and legacy needs of others

### **Part Three: EOLC 102, Working with Families, Groups and Communities to Prepare for Death**

#### **6 Weeks (36 hours)**

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

- Teach families how to involve their children in the death and grief process
- Explain the steps of getting the family home prepared for an expected death in the home
- Identify the signs of caregiver burnout and help others recognize the signs in themselves
- Coach others how to have those difficult conversations with their neighbors
- Teach the importance of grief and loss as a fundamental aspect of life
- Teach others how to create an enduring relationship with the deceased
- Lead community workshop on the topics of dying, death, grief, and end of life planning

### **Part Four: Practicum – Self-Directed Practicum**



### **PRAC 112 (20 hours)**

Students can choose from a wide variety of practicum placements. Students will have up to 4 weeks to complete this requirement for graduation.

## **LIST OF COURSES AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **EOLC 100, Personal End of Life Planning and Self Care**

Death, grief, and loss are a part of the lifecycle. However, these integral parts of the lifecycle are commonly feared, ignored, or bypassed, as our North American culture tends to be both death and grief adverse. As a result, many have lost touch with the skills and awareness that end-of-life coaching requires. The individuals and communities touched by dying, death, grief and loss still need support – from the personal to the strategic which is why this course is a crucial starting point to approaching this subject matter. In the field of dying, death, grief and loss, self-awareness and self-care are paramount. This ensures that the coach is well prepared mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually to face dying and death in a healthy and supportive way. Throughout this course students will explore their own unique perspectives of dying, death, grief and loss to understand the impact their personal view could have on clients. Participants will create their own end of life plan and in doing so will learn how to coach others through the same process. Learners will develop their own self-care plan and understand how to teach others to do the same thing for themselves. Upon completion of this course learners will have a solid grasp of the importance of end-of-life planning, preparation, and self-care.

### **EOLC 101, The Reality of Death and Dying**

Students will learn and understand the human death process and be able to teach others what to expect when death comes knocking. They will also learn how to deal with difficult deaths that include suicide, drug overdoses, murder, traumatic deaths, and Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD). In exploring these difficult deaths learners will become aware of the impact these unique and challenging deaths can have on the grief process. They will be able to guide and support individuals through the phases of active dying, pre-grief, and post death grief no matter what the cause of death.

### **EOLC 102, Working with Families, Groups and Communities to Prepare for Death**

In this segment of the Program students will step into the role of end-of-life coach and learn how to support individuals, families, and communities through grief, loss, death and dying. Learners will also develop the skills to lead End of Life Planning workshops for small groups and community organizations. During this final course of the program students will tie it all together and be able to educate others through the entire process of end-of-life planning, pre-grieving, active dying, loss, grief and making meaning of a life lived. Learners will be able to lead death café style support groups that foster the understanding of the real processes surrounding dying, death, and grief. Learners will become increasingly comfortable speaking publicly about these often taboo and challenging topics.

### **PRAC 112, Self-Directed Practicum**

Students can choose from a wide variety of practicum placements including community centers, hospice, and palliative care centers such as the BC Hospice and Palliative Care Association, which has 57 hospice society members, and social service agencies such as the Federation of Community





Social Services of BC with 140 member agencies. Students can also lead their own bereavement groups through the self-led practicum option.

### **Possible Careers**

Community Services Worker  
Grief and Loss Coach/Educator  
Bereavement Services Coordinator  
Bereavement Facilitator  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Hospice End-of-Life Coach  
Funeral Director (with additional training)