

July
2021

Funeral and Cremation Services Council of Saskatchewan Newsletter

Edition
#5

Your 2021 – 2022 Council

At the special meeting of Council following the May 13th, 2021, Annual General Meeting, Dustin Hall was elected as Chairperson of Council and Shannon Leson was elected Vice-Chairperson of Council

Dustin Hall - Chairperson & Industry Representative
Shannon Leson - Vice-Chairperson & Industry Representative
Chelsea Krentz - Industry Representative
R. Mark Muir - Industry Representative
Amanda Starosta - Industry Representative
Don Sheppard - Industry Representative
Nancy Kirk - Member Appointed
Gay Patrick - Member Appointed
Scott Moffat - Member Appointed
Robert Volk - Member Appointed
Denny Huyghebaert - Deputy Superintendent of Funeral and Cremation Services, Saskatchewan Justice

"Our fingertips don't fade from the lives we touch" – Judy Blume

Employment Opportunities?

Looking to expand your staff? Please let us know! We would be happy to post any job opportunities you may have within your funeral home.

Our website analytics have shown significant traffic activity, especially to the employment opportunities section of our website.

Do not miss out!

Please contact Council administration today.



Follow us on Facebook

[Funeral and Cremation Services Council of Saskatchewan](#)



2021 VIRTUAL SPRING SYMPOSIUM RECAP

The 2021 FCSCS Virtual Spring Symposium included sessions on numerous topics throughout the day and a half event with the decision made by Council members to offer Saskatchewan licensees to attend for free this year.

With 257 people registered, day one of the virtual symposium saw 232 licensees and 13 guests attend while day two had 185 licensees and 10 guests in attendance. As of June 4th, all professional development profiles were updated. Out of 333 licensed individuals in Saskatchewan only 80 licensees have yet to satisfy their credit requirements prior to October 31, 2021! This is absolutely amazing!

Based on the feedback received from licensees in attendance many enjoyed and appreciated they were able to attend virtually as it was more cost-effective and accessible to those who have not been able to attend previously due to family, work or staffing requirements. On the other hand, many missed meeting face to face which allowed for visiting, networking, and collaborating with other funeral professionals.

As with anything new, there were a few hiccups, and the administration staff would like to thank all those who were in attendance for their patience to address the issues we encountered. Due to the current COVID restrictions at the time of the symposium a big thank you goes out to Jeff Weafer and Regina Funeral Home & Cemetery for providing the accommodations to host the event virtually. Thank you also goes out to all the presenters and the Inland Audio Visual and Convene teams for making this year's event a great success. In addition, Kim Eberts is to be thanked for all the behind the scenes work she did in making the symposium a success!

Here's hoping we can meet in person next year for the 2022 Spring Symposium!



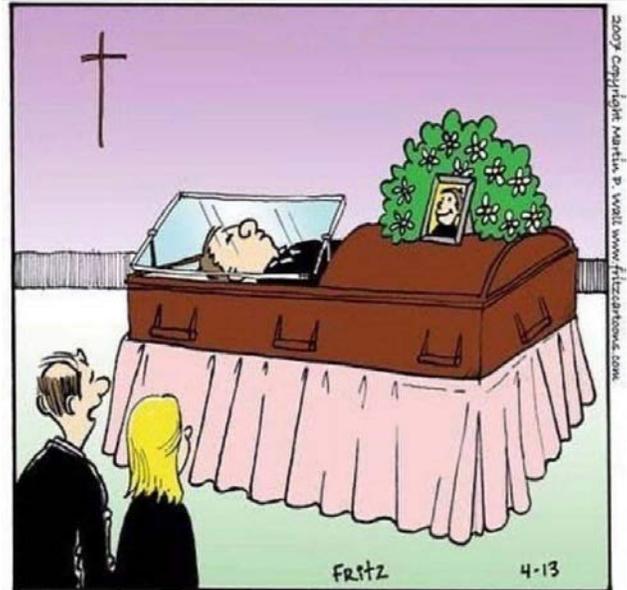
Professional Development Credits are now due October 31st, annually

Compliance Update

As of January 1st, 2021, there have been 60 virtual compliance reviews conducted.

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5 complaints have been received since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.



NOW IS THE SNEEZE  
GUARD REALLY NECESSARY?

*Whether helping first responders on the scene, assisting families of victims, or providing grief support, Funeral Directors never fail to offer a helping hand during our darkest hours.*

*Disposition Statistics*

| Year | Burial | Cremation | Unknown | Other | Total Deaths | % of Death Increase/Decrease | % of Cremation |
|------|--------|-----------|---------|-------|--------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 2010 | 4157   | 5012      | 5       | 0     | 9174         |                              | 54.63%         |
| 2011 | 4098   | 5170      | 9       | 2     | 9279         | 1.14%                        | 55.72%         |
| 2012 | 3950   | 5345      | 0       | 10    | 9305         | 0.28%                        | 57.44%         |
| 2013 | 3829   | 5567      | 1       | 9     | 9406         | 1.09%                        | 59.19%         |
| 2014 | 3676   | 5718      | 0       | 6     | 9400         | -0.06%                       | 60.83%         |
| 2015 | 3566   | 5852      | 0       | 3     | 9421         | 0.22%                        | 62.12%         |
| 2016 | 3483   | 5963      | 0       | 3     | 9449         | 0.30%                        | 63.11%         |
| 2017 | 3181   | 6318      | 0       | 3     | 9502         | 0.56%                        | 66.49%         |
| 2018 | 3162   | 6518      | 1       | 5     | 9686         | 1.94%                        | 67.29%         |
| 2019 | 3117   | 6363      | 0       | 2     | 9482         | -2.11%                       | 67.11%         |
| 2020 | 3145   | 6873      | 0       | 2     | 10020        | 5.67%                        | 68.59%         |

**Unsure of Current  
COVID-19 Restrictions?  
Call the Business Support  
Team @  
1-844-800-8688**

# Maintaining Good Mental Health As A Funeral Director

National Funeral Directors Association - March 2, 2021

Many funeral directors see their role as serving a greater purpose, some even iterating a modified proverb known as the Peter Parker principle, "With great responsibility comes great reward." However, a funeral director's occupation requires more than physical labor and a particular skill set. It requires "superpowers" to take on the emotional labor of listening to families who have experienced loss while also helping them plan funeral services for their loved ones who have passed.

After listening to Nancy Weil, a guest contributor for NFDA, share how the COVID-19 pandemic had created an upheaval in funeral homes' normal rhythms, I was inspired to write an article about recognizing the signs of burnout. I know you will understand from your own experiences how the pandemic may have encumbered your business's routine responsibilities with additional protocols that impacted the emotional and mental health of you and your staff.

## Facing Unprecedented Challenges Builds Stress

In 2020 funeral directors were forced to make many changes in their routines, from adopting stricter protocols for protecting workers to learning new regulations for cremation and burial. Many even transitioning in-person memorial services to one hundred percent virtually online. Facing these challenges takes a hefty emotional toll. Understand, first and foremost, it is okay to acknowledge that your line of work is difficult and that it's affecting you in ways which at times, are difficult to manage.

Behavioral health specialists help individuals recognize the signs of stress, identify the root cause, and identify a means by which to lessen the impact on one's health and well-being. Having a strategy to cope is essential towards maintaining the mental health of staff and the funeral home environment.

## Recognizing Stressors and Choosing Healthy Ways to Cope

Stressors for some include the almost daily routine of figuring out how to safely provide funeral services in line with ever-changing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. For others, it's the pressure of managing new technical skills, for instance, those required to deliver virtual video generated

services. Still, others feel the pressure always to be "on" as COVID spotlights how society manages the virus's victims. Long hours, unpredictable workloads, and the emotional demands of the planning, arrangement, embalming, and cremation processes build, forces us into a position where we feel "compassion fatigue."

Yes, even seemingly basic responses to others, such as compassion, sympathy, and empathy, can be fatiguing. This feeling is normal. As one funeral industry professional told Vice News, "It wasn't the dead causing her anxiety—it was the living." Even so, experiencing this type of fatigue can be a sign of professional burnout and may grow worse over time without a robust plan for managing your mental health in a supportive and healthy way.

### **Signs Of Burnout**

We've all heard the term "burnout," but what does this mean in a professional context? How do you know if you're experiencing burnout rather than just a bad day?

Burnout is not a medical condition. It generally emerges in response to prolonged workplace stress. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines burnout as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that is not successfully managed." Burnout, if left untreated, can lead to acute and long-term consequences to physical and mental health—both of which can disrupt your ability to work, maintain healthy relationships, and adequately attend to your day-to-day responsibilities.

Signs of burnout can include:

- Low energy
- Exhaustion
- Feeling mentally detached from your work
- Feeling negative or cynical about your work
- Reduced efficacy at work (e.g. unable to keep up, procrastination)
- Loss of motivation
- Feeling hopeless or helpless
- Changes in appetite or sleep
- Sense of loneliness
- Isolating from others, including spouses, friends, and family
- Headaches and muscle pain

Signs of burnout vary from person to person, and you don't have to experience all of the common signs and symptoms of burnout to be verifiably burned out from your job. Physical and psychological symptoms can manifest in people in different ways.

### Managing Mental Health

Self-care is a crucial aspect of maintaining mental health. Contrary to popular belief, self-care does not solely refer to activities associated with consumerism, such as going to a spa or shopping. At its core, self-care refers to the necessary act of taking care of oneself. In day-to-day life, this can include making sure you're eating enough, drinking enough water, and taking permitted breaks to give yourself the well-deserved space to breathe, acknowledging your stress, and taking steps to recharge.

Managing mental health also requires more than what you can give yourself. Self-care is one of several strategies you can utilize to manage your sense of mental well-being and prevent burnout. Additional methods for maintaining good mental health might include:

- **Reach out to your support system:** Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or spouse. Communicate with them. They care about you and will appreciate the opportunity to provide support.
- **Talk to a professional:** Don't face these challenges alone. Talking to a therapist or grief counselor and allows you to unload the emotional burden of your work. They'll teach how to process your emotions in a healthy and productive way.
- **Get moving:** Going for a walk, jog, or engage in other forms of joyful movement. These activities boost endorphins associated with pleasure, relaxation, and a sense of well-being.
- **Be honest with yourself:** Repressing your emotions can lead to an unsupportive buildup of stress, anxiety, and sadness. Be honest with yourself about how you're feeling and its impact on your daily life. This is an important step towards effectively managing mental health during and after work hours.
- **Call on pandemic resources** that help you deal with the added stress of being a funeral director during such a difficult stage in history.

**Above all, make mental health a priority.** We need food and water to survive - the basics of physical wellbeing – but equally as important is mental wellness. Acknowledging the emotional toll that comes with your work and effectively utilizing strategies to manage difficulties as they arise is a sign of strength and resilience.

If you or someone you know may be using unsupportive strategies to manage stress, such as increased alcohol consumption, drug use, or unusual, isolating behavior; seek a medical professional's advice immediately.

**About the Author - McKenna Schueler** is a content specialist for the behavioral health company Ark Behavioral Health, which owns and operates a network of substance abuse treatment centers in Massachusetts. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, with a minor in Psychology. From where she lives in Tampa, Florida, McKenna also contributes local news coverage as an independent journalist. For more information about Ark Behavioral Health, visit [arkbh.com](http://arkbh.com)

### ***Being There***

The calling of the funeral director is

To be there when someone is in need.

To be there no matter the time, or the conditions.

To be there with words of comfort and concern.

To be there to give quiet guidance through the storm.

To be there for the final tribute that honors a life.

There is no higher privilege.

~Doug Manning

Do you have something you want to share? Contact us at [administration@funeralinfo.ca](mailto:administration@funeralinfo.ca)

**FCSCS**  
3847C Albert Street  
Regina, SK S4S 3R4  
Phone: (306) 584-1575