

## Coping With Grief Related to COVID-19

The circumstances of the Covid19 pandemic are introducing challenging elements into the already difficult context of dying, death, loss, and grief. Like in wartime, many other people are experiencing loss under these conditions; you are not alone. That doesn't make your suffering any less painful or unique. It does mean that everyone has to be more creative about how they think about connection. When a connection cannot be physical, connection must be through memory. It must come from remembering loving moments, tender exchanges, funny quirks, annoying habits--- all the qualities that make up a person and their way of being with others. We can think love, send love, even if we can't physically be present to those we love. It is likely that if you were not physically with the person who died at the moment of their death, you were there with that person in spirit. The dying surround themselves with those they need close.

1. Grief takes time. Almost everyone heals from loss.
2. Rituals help many people cope with grief. Acts of prayer, worship, creating altars may be helpful to you and your family. But this is not true for everyone
3. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.
4. People use different words to refer to their grief. It's important to use a word that suits you even if the people around you are using a different word or expression.
5. Grief is often made up of many different feelings, including shock, sadness, anger, regret, confusion, pain, and fear. Self-compassion is always helpful when you are grieving.
6. When people grieve, they may be forgetful, clumsy, or like a space cadet. You may feel nothing at times and then feel overwhelmed by emotion at other times. Grief is more like the many facets of a prism.
7. Even if other people have lost the same person, that doesn't mean that their grief will be the same as yours.
8. Death doesn't have to end your feeling of connection to the person who died. Sometimes choosing something you can keep in your pocket or on your phone to remember your loved one can be helpful. Dedicating some part of what you do every day to the memory of the person who died can be soothing—for instance, dedicating drinking your first cup of coffee.
9. Talking about the person who died can be helpful. Acting like the other person never existed is usually not beneficial.
10. You may know many people who have died. This doesn't lessen the pain of your loss.
11. Communities will need to find ways to honor the dead. You may want to participate in personal, family, group, and community ways of mourning the dead and celebrating their lives. Or you may be unable to join with others now.
12. Many people experience the pain of grief physically. People may have difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite, or physical discomforts. This is common.

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13. It is essential to take care of your physical body when grieving. Be sure to sleep, eat nutritious food, and exercise.
14. People often grew up with certain traditions that are difficult to maintain decades later. At times of grief, it is natural to miss the older traditions and regret that those traditions are less available as sources of comfort.
15. In many families, the expectations of men and women, boys and girls at the time of death and the months following, are quite different. These expectations may or may not be a good fit for you personally.
16. Many people are exhausted while they grieve, and they do not find that they have the energy to be as friendly and caring of others as they had been before and as they would prefer to be. Again, this is a common experience.
17. Many factors besides your own feelings impact how you and your family can grieve. How the surrounding community treats you is one factor. Your grief may be affected by your immigration status or the immigration status of the person who died. There may be financial or legal complications that follow the death of your loved one that make it harder for you to be with your feelings. It is essential to recognize that your grief may be burdened by additional factors that in a more perfect world you would not have to cope with at all.
18. Eventually, there may be support groups for people who have had deaths in their families and communities, and workplaces. You need to choose the right time for you to go to these groups.
19. There are many resources for people who are experiencing grief. There are blogs and books and hotlines, and groups. No one has to suffer alone.

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