

Grieving the loss of a loved one during COVID-19



When you lose someone close to you, grief can be overwhelming. Grief is a natural, normal response to loss, and it can happen to anyone. However, grief during COVID-19 is more difficult. Many are experiencing the shock of unexpected loss of a loved one. And often we aren't able to physically be there to support one another as we deal with the emotions.

Coping with grief

Feelings of sadness, shock, numbness, anger, guilt, anxiety or fear are normal after the death of a loved one. Below are some things you can do to help get through the grief during this uncertain time:

- **Stay connected.** Reach out to family, friends or colleagues by phone, text, email or video calls.
- **Feel your emotions.** Give yourself permission to experience all of your emotional reactions as you move through this time.
- **Take care of yourself.** Maintain physical hygiene, good nutrition, exercise and sleep.
- **Seek help.** Look into online support groups for grief and loss.

Remember – you are not alone. Find ways to connect as much as possible.

Supporting one another through grief

Traditions of grieving together and holding a funeral or memorial can help people cope. But due to COVID-19, many people are delaying these customs. And those that are taking place need to follow social distancing guidelines. We are not able to share grief in ways that we have in the past. So we need to find other ways of supporting one another.

Below are some suggestions that may help:

- If you are planning the service for a loved one who has passed away, ask about setting up streaming or video that you and others can watch from home. If you are not the one arranging the service, ask if streaming, listening to or watching the service is possible. Ask if they can archive the service for those with young children who might be frightened.

- Arrange a virtual service for family and friends to share stories, memories and feelings.
- Plan a memorial, celebration or other service to commemorate your loved one after the COVID-19 restrictions have lessened. For example, you can look into the types of places where you would want to hold the service and make a list of who to invite and what you would like to say. Prepare for when you can put these plans into action.
- Think of ways that you can perform a ceremony or commemorate your loved one from home. You can try lighting a candle, planting flowers on your patio or creating a commemorative photo journal.

These suggestions cannot replace the traditions of mourning together. But in this difficult time, finding new ways to help people find solace at a time of grief is worth the effort.

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