

If you have lost a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic...

Grieving the loss of a loved one while coping with the fear and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic can be especially overwhelming. Social distancing, "stay-at home-orders," and limits on the size of in-person gatherings have changed the way friends and family can gather and grieve, including holding traditional funeral services, regardless of whether or not the person's death was due to COVID-19. However, these types of prevention strategies are important to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Some actions you can take to help you cope with feelings of grief after the loss of a loved one include:

- Connecting with other people
 - Invite people to call you or host conference calls with family members and friends to stay connected.
 - Ask family and friends to share stories and pictures with you via mailed letters, email, phone, or video chat or via apps or social media that allow groups to share with each other (e.g., group chat, group messaging, Facebook).
 - Coordinate a date and time for family and friends to honor your loved one by reciting a selected poem, spiritual reading, or prayer within their own households.
- Creating memories or rituals.
 - Develop a virtual memory book, blog, or webpage to remember your loved one, and ask family and friends to contribute their memories and stories.
 - Take part in an activity, such as planting a tree or preparing a favorite meal that has significance to you and the loved one who died.
- Asking for help from others
 - Seek out grief counseling or mental health services, support groups, or hotlines, especially those that can be offered over the phone or online.
 - Seek spiritual support from faith-based organizations, including your religious leaders and congregations, if applicable.
 - Seek support from other trusted community leaders and friends.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the family and close friends of a person who died of COVID-19 may experience stigma, such as social avoidance or rejection. Stigma hurts everyone by creating fear or anger towards other people. Some people may avoid contacting you, your family members, and friends when they would normally reach out to you. Stigma related to COVID-19 is less likely to occur when people know the facts and share them with extended family, friends, and others in your community.

If you feel distress from other types of loss or change...

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you may feel grief due to loss of a job; inability to connect in-person with friends, family or religious organizations; missing special events and milestones (such as graduations, weddings, vacations); and experiencing drastic changes to daily routines and ways of life that bring comfort. You may also feel a sense of guilt for grieving over losses that seem less important than loss of life. Grief is a universal emotion; there is no right or wrong way to experience it, and all losses are significant.

Here are some ways to cope with feelings of grief:

- Acknowledge your losses and your feelings of grief.
 - Find ways to express your grief. Some people express grief and find comfort through art, gardening, writing, talking to friends or family, cooking, music, gardening or other creative practices.
- Consider developing new rituals in your daily routine to stay connected with your loved ones to replace those that have been lost.
 - People who live together may consider playing board games and exercising together outdoors.
 - People who live alone or are separated from their loved ones may consider interacting through phone calls and apps that allow for playing games together virtually.
- If you are worried about future losses, try to stay in the present and focus on aspects of your life that you have control over right now.