

# Grief and CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



## TYPES OF GRIEF

Grief is a natural response to loss. As we continue to navigate life during the COVID-19 pandemic, loss is being experienced in many ways. There is no right way to grieve and grieving takes time.

**Primary loss** includes loss of a loved one or a major life change (loss of a job, divorce, homelessness, etc.)

**Secondary loss** may not be obvious and could include a perceived or real loss of freedom, loss of companionship, support services, recreational, school and spiritual activities, family gatherings, etc.

**Anticipatory loss** may appear with the anticipation of an unknown future such as someone who has a family member who has COVID-19 and/or COVID-19 complications.



## SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

Grief manifests itself in emotional/psychological symptoms as well as physical symptoms.

### Emotional/Psychological

- Disbelief
- Trouble accepting the loss
- Anger
- Sadness
- Sense of guilt
- Fear
- Social withdrawal
- Avoidance
- Difficulty concentrating and thinking clearly
- Difficulty making decisions
- Loss of interest
- Feelings of disconnectedness

### Physical

- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Trouble breathing
- Weight loss/weight gain
- Aches and pains
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Restlessness

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## STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH LOSS

Remember that everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time. Below are some helpful strategies for coping.

- Acknowledge your pain
- Be kind to yourself
- Exercise regularly, eat healthy and practice good sleep habits
- Honor your loss
- Focus on healing
- Accepting help
- Ask for support
- Engage in activities that bring you joy/peace
- Keep a journal
- Talk to those who bring comfort when you're ready
- Seek support from family, close friends, spiritual leaders, therapists, etc.
- When others reach out, be honest and clear



## WHEN TO GET HELP

Reach out to a licensed professional if you feel any of the following:

- Feeling like life isn't worth living/thoughts of suicide
- Wishing you had died with your loved one
- Guilt over the loss or for failing to prevent it
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Difficulty trusting others
- Unable to perform your normal daily activities
- Difficulty planning for the future and feeling that life is unbearable

## WHERE TO GET HELP

- Adult telehealth services through MCW Psychiatry - call 414-955-8900
- Child telehealth services through MCW Child Psychiatry - call 414-266-2932
- For grief counseling and other community resources, dial 211
- In the U.S.: Crisis Call Center at 775-784-8090

Sources: National center for PTSD, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, The Center for Complicated Grief, Harvard Medical School Special health Report, Mental Health of America Wisconsin

Download here:

[covid19.mcw.edu](https://covid19.mcw.edu)

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