

Grief, loss, and COVID-19: Losing a caregiver

More than 200,000 children have lost a parent or other caregiver that lived with them due to COVID-19. This loss has especially impacted communities of color. If your child lost a caregiver, they may be dealing with trauma or grief even though it seems like everyone else is “back to normal”.



→ How can I tell if my child is dealing with grief?

Grieving is a normal reaction after the death of a caregiver. You may notice signs that your child is dealing with grief. Some of the signs include:

- Getting angry more easily than normal
- Trouble sleeping
- Having a hard time paying attention
- Getting bad grades
- Feelings of fear about safety of themselves or others
- Risky behaviors like using drugs or alcohol

Remember, not all children react to grief or stress the same way. If you feel like something is off, talk to your child.

→ How can I help my child?

Let your child talk when they are ready.

- Don't force them to talk when they don't want to. Listen carefully and ask questions in a non-judgmental way. Let them know that all emotions are ok.

Practice calming and coping strategies with your child.

- Model healthy coping strategies for your child. For example, let them see you take deep breaths when you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Let your child talk or express thoughts or feelings in creative ways, such as drawing or singing.

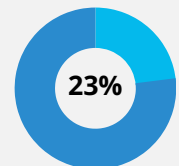
Answer questions and share facts in a way that your child can understand. Be honest and share clear information that is right for their age.

Find a counselor or therapist who is trained to treat childhood trauma and grief issues.

Take care of yourself too. Grieving children do better when they have a healthy adult taking care of them.



23% of COVID-19 deaths are attributed to Black people, even though they only make up 13% of the U.S. population.





What resources are available for my family?

- **National Alliance for Children’s Grief:** Raises awareness about the needs of children and teens who are grieving a death and provides education and resources for anyone who supports them. <https://nacg.org/>
- **Hidden Pain:** Resources for families, educators, and community members to help support those who have lost a caregiver to COVID-19. <https://www.hiddenpain.us/get-support/>
- **Sesame Street- Resources for helping kids grieve** <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/grief/>
- **Dougy grief resources:** Provides local peer grief support, resources, and training. <https://www.dougy.org/grief-support-resources>

Minority groups have shared experiences that are different than people who are white. For this reason, their grief experiences are unique. Here are some resources gathered while keeping cultural differences in mind:

- **Ayana Therapy:** <https://www.ayanatherapy.com/>
 - Mental healthcare for marginalized and intersectional communities
- **Therapy for Black Girls:** <https://therapyforblackgirls.com/>
- **LatinxGrief:** <https://www.instagram.com/latinxgrief/>
- **The dinner party:** <https://www.thedinnerparty.org/>



Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, racism and long-time problems with access to healthcare have led to health disparities (preventable differences) in communities of color. Pointing out these problems is only the first step in improving the health and wellbeing of these communities.

