

How to cope with grief and loss during a pandemic



Many people have felt grief during the COVID-19 pandemic, even as many things have returned to normal. Whether your grief is due to worry, a big life change, or the loss of a loved one, there are healthy ways to cope.

→ What are common symptoms of grief?

As you go through the grieving process, you are likely to feel different emotions that can change over time. Common symptoms of grief include feeling:

- Shock, disbelief, or denial
- Worry or anxiety
- Distress
- Anger
- Sadness
- Loss of sleep and appetite

You may feel all, some, or none of these symptoms. There is no single way to grieve.



→ How can I cope with grief and loss?

Start by making sure your basic needs are met. Make your physical health and these basic needs a priority:



Sleep

Try to get 7-8 hours of sleep every day. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.



Hygiene

Take time each day to brush your teeth, shower, and change into clean clothes



Move your body

Try to be active at least 20-30 minutes a day, such as taking a walk. When you are active, your brain makes chemicals that help improve your mood and energy levels.



Eat well

Try to eat less fast food, salt, and sugar. These can cause your blood sugar to rise and fall, which can lead to sleep problems and anxiety (But don't shun the occasional treat that makes you happy!).





I've lost a loved one during the pandemic. How do I cope?

Losing a loved one is very difficult. To get help coping with feelings of grief after the loss of a loved one, you could:

- **Connect with your people.** When we are connected to others, we feel less anxiety and depression. Plan something to look forward to, in-person, or even just a phone call.
 - Plan a date and time for family and friends to honor your loved one by reading a poem or sharing a prayer
- **Create and keep memories.** Make a book of photos, or go on the internet to create a social media page, blog, or website to remember your loved one. Ask family and friends to add their memories and stories.
- **Talk about your loss.** You may find this comforting and feel less alone.



How can I move forward?

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a traumatic event for many people, whether you lost someone, were a frontline worker, or were just overwhelmed with uncertainty. There are a couple things you can do to help process what you went through:

- **Seek out professional mental health services.** They can help you identify any long-lasting mental health challenges from the pandemic and recommend any needed treatment.
- **Take a break from the news and social media.** Too much information can be overwhelming. Try setting a 15-minute timer for your social media and news apps.



Are there resources to help me get through this hard time?

Yes! There are many resources available online and in the community.

- **Disaster Distress Helpline:** call or text 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish)
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Dial 988 for English or Spanish, or Lifeline Chat. TTY users can use their preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.
- **Apps to lower stress and anxiety:**
 - Moodfit: Mental Health Fitness
 - Calm: App for meditation
 - MindShift CBT: evidence-based anxiety relief

**Find help
in a crisis:**
cdc.gov/how-rightnow/get-help



Local resources

- Space for local resources