



Covid-19 Grief and Loss



There isn't a singular handout that can prepare us for the grief process. Even under normal circumstances, grief is a highly personal and emotional experience. But we aren't under normal circumstances anymore. We are being asked to quickly adapt to a new normal that includes an extra layer of anxiety around dealing with loss or even being adjacent to loss during this pandemic.

You may be asking yourself: *Have I been exposed? Is my family exposed? What do I say to my co-worker who has lost a loved one? Have they been exposed?*

These questions and feelings are normal. After all, anxiety stems from uncertainty and it's hard to imagine a more uncertain situation than the one we are in. We want to share some tips and advice from therapists to help us all come together and support each other through this difficult time:

Grief doesn't have a timeline

If your co-worker has lost a loved one, expecting them to return to "normal" at some point isn't realistic. We are all experiencing loss in one way or another; the loss of routines, social connection, and a sense of 'normality.' Be kind to yourself throughout this journey.

Social Distancing Doesn't Equal Social Isolation

Grieving in isolation can be unhealthy and even dangerous. Left alone, thoughts of anger and grief can spiral out of control. If you are going through a major loss, be sure to increase your social support network. Reaching out to close friends or a counsellor can help you structure your thoughts and deal with the emotional fallout of loss. Programs like Google Hangouts, FaceTime, and Skype can help keep us connected.

Anxiety around contracting the virus is understandable but emotionally distancing from those who may have been sick or who have lost a loved one to illness only serves to isolate.

Expect Feelings of Grief to Well Up at Unexpected Times

Life goes on and so do our emotions around loss. Often surfacing when unbidden, these emotions can feel jolting and disorienting. Stop, take a breath. If you can sit with the feeling and allow it to be within you, that's ideal. Take a short break to gather yourself and return to the task at hand. You'll have more opportunities to process these feelings.

Permission To Feel

Grief and loss feel bad, which means we often try to run from the feelings by using distractions, poor coping habits, and staying busy. Grief, as with all uncomfortable feelings, must be felt to get resolution. It helps to become aware of uncomfortable feelings. But as mentioned before, there is no timeline for grief. Choose when you are ready to pay attention to those feelings. Don't put a lot of "should's" on yourself.

Let others grieve how best works for them. We can support them with kindness,

understanding, and patience. Seeing others suffering can cause an impulse to fix it for them. That is impossible so best to not try as it may send a message that what they're feeling isn't okay.

Be Gentle with Yourself and Others

You can't rush the grieving process. We all process grief differently so don't compare yourself to others or to some ideal of what the grief process should look like. It sounds cliché, but being self-compassionate helps us be more compassionate with others.

Reach out to the EAP

Triad is still here to support you. Give us a call any time between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Call: 970-242-9536

Toll: 877-679-1100

Website: triadeap.com