



Love and loss

Grieving during COVID-19

When the death is sudden

Saying goodbye to a loved one can feel like an important part of grieving. It's a chance to say what matters. And it can soften the blow of your loss.

Long illnesses give loved ones a chance to prepare. But COVID-19 symptoms often come on quickly and suddenly. And even healthy people may pass away unexpectedly.

It's only natural to feel shocked when this happens. It may be hard to believe. And you might feel guilty that you didn't get to share how much that person meant to you.

Ambiguous loss

Missing out on the traditional markers of death can make it hard to get closure. This can lead to something called "ambiguous loss." And that can make you feel helpless and frustrated.

Ambiguous loss is a risk factor for complicated grief, sometimes called prolonged grief disorder. Prolonged grief disorder lasts a long time and prevents you from doing day-to-day activities. Be sure to seek help if you experience this.

Coping with loss

Allowing feelings helps you move through them. But it's not always enough. Here are some ways to cope during this hard time:

- **Keep a journal.** Writing down your feelings can be therapeutic.
- **Reach out and talk to people.** Even if you can't be together in person, it's important to connect. So use phone or video chat to get support from friends and family and find out how they're doing.
- **Find an online support group.** You're not alone. Many people are losing loved ones right now.
- **Talk about your loss.** Bring up the person in conversation. Share your memories. This lets others know it's okay to talk about the deceased.
- **Ask for help.** Grief is normal and healthy. But if you're feeling "stuck" in your grief after several weeks, don't be afraid to reach out for professional help.

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Finding a new way

Being with friends and family can help us cope with grief. And social distancing means you may not be able to be with other loved ones, comfort them or receive their comfort. You might not be able to attend a funeral or visit the mourners afterwards.

It's important to come up with new ways to find closure and grieve right now. Here are some ideas:

- Have a virtual funeral or visits with the mourners in the days following
- Create a scrapbook for your loved one
- Write a letter to your loved one
- Talk to a mental health counselor by phone or video

Loss is always hard. But you will come out on the other side. And yes, you will be different. Because love changes you. And even if the person is no longer with you, love remains.

If you're having a hard time with your loss, we're here for you. Contact us anytime.



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