



# Grief During Covid-19

We as a global community have faced many losses in the past 4 months which has given rise to a pandemic of grief; feelings of uncertainty, losses, limitations, cancellations, sadness and social isolation. Added to this, is the death of loved ones during this time and restrictions to funerals and celebrations of life have been difficult for our community and the families who are grieving.

A normal reaction to loss is grief. Grief is both a feeling and a process that people typically go through after a death or other significant loss. Any meaningful loss requires us to cope and imagine a new, changed future.

We have never dealt with this exact situation before and we want to acknowledge the new challenges that may arise. We are all navigating new territory together, so be kind to yourself.

Grief looks and feels different to each person. Some feelings that can occur during grief include: anger, guilt, confusion, disbelief or sadness. Remember there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grieving is unique to you.



We are social beings, acknowledge the grief that comes with being disconnected from others.



Support yourself emotionally by taking care of your physical needs (sleep, nutrition, fresh air, exercise).



A teen's grief can seem unpredictable and explosive at times. They are grieving while their brains are experiencing a great deal of change. Have open conversations with patience, understanding and reminders that you love them.



Acknowledge your pain, make space to grieve and practice self-compassion.

Cultivate patience, acceptance and hope.

Reach out to your community Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Spiritual Advisor support, or health care providers for grief support and information.



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Any meaningful loss requires us to cope and imagine a new, changed future. First take care of yourself to ensure you can care for others in a good way.

Even in such a disconnected time of social isolation, there are many ways to stay connected through phone calls, texts, social media, face time, prayer and ceremonies.

There are many ways to honour those who have passed: memorials, facebook, virtual groups, honouring events and actions.

Pray in your own way. In a mindset (spirit) of prayer, make a tobacco offering or offering of a traditional medicine (cedar, sage, or sweetgrass).

Smudging is a way of entering into prayer, and is a powerful way to cleanse and bless the body, mind and spirit.

Light a candle in memory, reach out to someone grieving by phone or video chat.



Water is a sacred gift and connects all living beings. Spend time by the water, make an offering to the water. It is important to honour your tears when grieving.



Meditation is a way of healing and relaxation. Find a quiet space, close your eyes and take five slow breaths. Play relaxing music or guided meditation recordings. Allow your mind to be free.

To cope with so many new changes and losses, try writing your thoughts down in a journal, drawing a picture or recording a voice memo on your phone to release any thoughts. Use a journal (in any form) to express gratitude and affirmations.

Participate in spiritual practices that are available that may be virtual, available online or safe small gatherings that may be occurring for ceremony, prayer, art, song and dance.



# Children and Grief

## **Children want to be told the truth about the death:**

Tell them in age-appropriate and direct language, ask them if they have any questions and clear up misconceptions

## **Children express their emotions through play and behaviors which may be problematic for you:**

They can't always tolerate intense emotions or know how to talk about them; they might make decisions you don't agree with; they need to take breaks from their grief and engage in age appropriate activities

## **Children look to you as a role model for how people grieve:**

Share your feelings while making them aware that they don't have to "fix it"; each child will grieve in their own unique way; they will grieve alone in an effort to shield you from their pain

## **Children want to talk about their person who died:**

They need you to tolerate listening when they tell their story or share their feelings; they fear that they will forget their loved one



## **Children need to know who would take care of them if you could not:**

They may fear for your safety especially when you are apart

## **They need to be taught coping strategies:**

Include ways to comfort themselves in your absence



## **Children benefit from being included in mourning rituals:**

your child needs the opportunity to participate in ongoing rituals; rituals aid in their understanding of death

## **They need you to help them feel safe:**

Provide clear and consistent boundaries, limits and expectations; give them room to safely interact with peers and adults outside of the family

## **Children need to be included when making decisions:**

About how to celebrate holidays, birthdays and anniversaries; about other family circumstances such as moving or changing schools

**Children need you to take care of yourself:  
they will only adapt as well as you do**

<https://kidsgrief.ca>

<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/grief>

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