

COVID-19 has impacted numerous communities across the United States. Many people may experience the loss of a loved one during this time due to the virus. This handout includes basic information about grief and the coping process.

### Symptoms of Grief

Grief can impact several aspects of our lives. The following are some common symptoms of grief.

**Physical:** Fatigue, gastro-intestinal upset, sleep disruption, appetite changes, headaches

**Emotional:** Sadness, anxiety, anger, guilt, confusion, irritability, lack of motivation, sense of abandonment

**Cognitive:** Difficulty concentrating, memory problems, intrusive thoughts/images of the lost loved one, academic or occupational difficulties

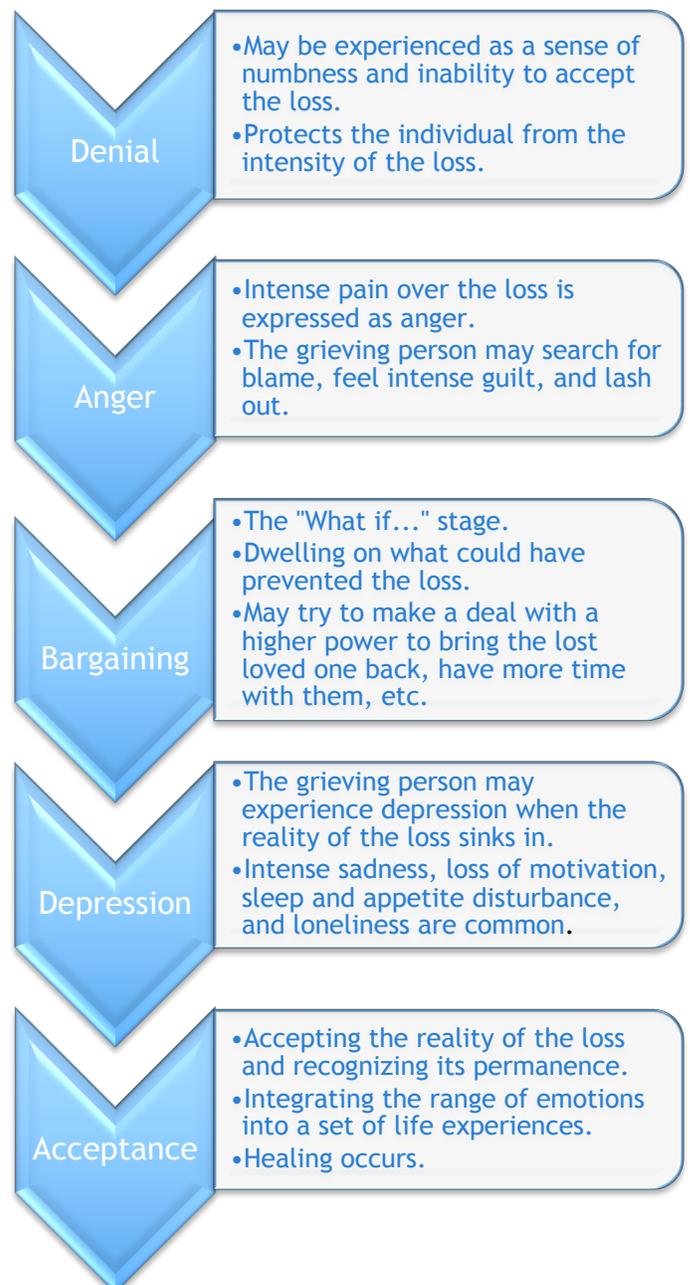
**Behavioral:** Crying, restlessness, lashing out at others, substance use or other risky behaviors that dull the pain

**Interpersonal:** Social isolation, feeling like others do not understand, noticing that others interact with you differently

**Spiritual:** Questioning God or one's faith, difficulty feeling hopeful, questioning one's sense of meaning and purpose

### Stages of Grief

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a psychiatrist and pioneer of near death studies, proposed a 5-stage model of grief.



## Ways to Cope With Grief



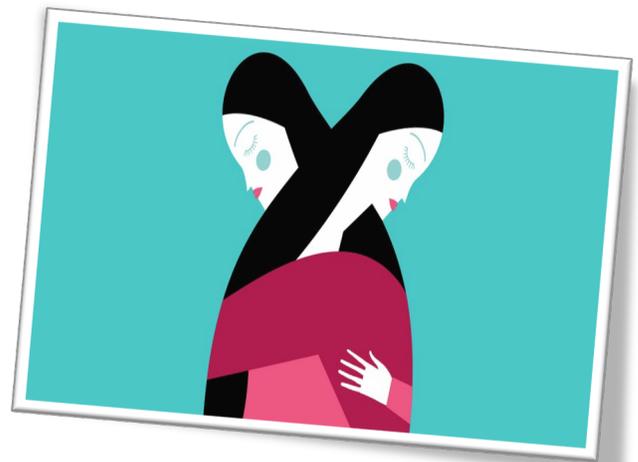
## Supporting Another Through the Grief Process

- ❖ Listen!
- ❖ Encourage the expression of grief
- ❖ Create a safe environment where the person can talk about and process the loss
- ❖ Support acceptance of all aspects of the loss
- ❖ Be willing to ask questions about and discuss the deceased if the bereaved finds it helpful
- ❖ Share information about the grief process
- ❖ Assist the in practical and concrete ways
- ❖ Avoid expressing pity or minimizing the loss
- ❖ Share information about support groups or other resources

## Resources and Support

- ❖ Actively Moving Forward (AMF) App - A grief support network for ages 18-30
- ❖ Grief Anonymous - A grief support organization that provides in-person support meetings and online support through Facebook groups
- ❖ [Onlinegriefsupport.com/groups](https://onlinegriefsupport.com/groups) - An online social support group in forum format
- ❖ [Whatsyourgrief.com](https://whatsyourgrief.com) for e-courses, podcasts, and webinars
- ❖ Talking with your minister, priest, etc.

- ❖ Connect with others who have experienced loss
- ❖ Seek out counseling services
- ❖ Write about the deceased/write a letter to the deceased
- ❖ Pursue new interests
- ❖ Spend time with friends
- ❖ Talk about grief with trusted family members and friends
- ❖ Engage in activities that provide a sense of normalcy
- ❖ Maintain a sense of community through volunteering, outreach, etc.
- ❖ Engage in spiritual/religious activities
- ❖ Create art to express grief
- ❖ Educate oneself about the grief process



This handout draws from content in *Coming to Grips with Loss: Normalizing the Grief Process* (Cummings, 2015), *Helping the Bereaved College Student* (Balk, 2011), and *African American Grief* (Rosenblatt & Wallace, 2005).

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