

How to Navigate Grief During COVID 19

COVID 19 has impacted us all, and sadly this has resulted in some families now dealing with the death of a loved one. Although agencies are working remotely, they are still available to provide support and resources. **How do we navigate grief after the loss of a loved one?**



(Exerpts from *Healthy Ways to Navigate Grief* by Margarita Tartakovsky, M.S.)

Many people use unhealthy ways to cope, such as ignoring their feelings, isolating themselves, setting a time limit or pretending their way through the grieving process, but when you're in the thick of the pain, confusion and chaos, it's hard to pick anything healthy. Instead you pick whatever you know, whatever is nearby or whatever is easiest. Navigating grief takes work. And it may mean doing things you're unfamiliar or uncomfortable with, such as actually feeling your feelings. But it's worth it. We may not naturally know the best ways to handle grief or we may resist following them. Like most things in life, we can practice, and we can learn.

Here are some helpful, healthy ways to navigate grief:

Heal together.

It is important for families to work through their grief together. Families should talk through their grief, listen to each other and feel comfortable crying together.

Helping a loved one through their grief means being there for them. Let them talk, cry, tell their story over and over to you. Say, 'I'm so sorry,' and 'I'm here for you.'

Acknowledge your feelings.

Avoid ignoring, escaping, pretending or burying your feelings. Instead, FEEL them: **F**reely **E**xperience **E**motion with **L**ove. It's OK to express that sadness, or anger, or fear, or pain, or whatever you're feeling. Give yourself permission to sit with your feelings. Do so lovingly, never judging what you feel. It only takes a couple of minutes to let your feelings be heard, and once they are, they usually quiet down for a while.

Give yourself time to grieve.

Don't put a time limit around your grief, which is a process. Your relationship with the deceased is unique and personal. It takes as long as it takes to grieve the loss and to adjust to life without your loved one.

Engage in healthy activities.

You can talk about your grief; physically release difficult emotions with exercise; express grief through dancing, painting, making collages or making music (these are especially helpful outlets for children); write about your thoughts and feelings; or cry.

Many people think weeping is for the weak. It's not. Consider the words of Washington Irving - "There is sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness—but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are messengers of over-whelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love."

Practice deep breathing.

While processing grief, [deep breathing](#) can be helpful. Practicing breathing from the diaphragm in a calming pattern helps slow the [anxiety](#) and tension that can often hit us in grief.

Seek counseling.

Counseling can give people an unbiased perspective and teach them healthy coping skills. It is recommended when grief has severely affected a person's daily life. Seek [therapy](#) if you're experiencing an intense [depression](#), feel suicidal or don't know how to cope.

Therapy also is an excellent option for families. It is important to find ways to bridge the grief gaps in our relationships, and seek outside help as needed, to keep our families strong.

Dealing with grief is a process that takes time. Give yourself the space to feel your feelings, practice self-care and seek support, from loved ones and a professional, if needed.

Agency Supports:

Centre for Grief and Healing - Bereaved Families of Ontario Halton Peel:

Services are provided in English and currently serve all ages. Support and/or care for Emotional/Spiritual Support, and Grief and Bereavement Support is provided.

Phone: (905) 848-4337 to leave your contact information

Email: info@bereavedfamilies.ca

Complete an online intake form for support. <https://www.bereavedfamilies.ca/intake-form>

Website: <https://www.bereavedfamilies.ca/>

Heart House Hospice:

"By listening and learning what is important to you and your family the goal of our team is to help you live well."

Online referral form for support: <https://hearthousehospice.com/how-we-help/referral-forms/>

Phone: 905 712 8119

Email: info@hearthousehospice.com

Website: <https://hearthousehospice.com/>

The Lighthouse for Grieving Children:

Lighthouse is also working remotely and can be contacted by email or phone:

E: info@grievingchildrenlighthouse.org

P: 905-337-2333

Website: www.grievingchildrenlighthouse.org