

Cornell COVID-19 Service of Remembrance

Support & Resources



Any death is hard, but death from COVID-19 can especially difficult. In many cases, we have been unable to be by our loved one's side in their last moments and cannot grieve or mourn in traditional ways (sit shiva, hold funerals or memorials, or hug, hold each other and cry together).

It can be helpful to process these experiences with others. Know that support is available, and that we can find strength and hope together.

Feelings After Death

No two people respond to loss in the same way. You and your friends/ family members may experience one or more of the following in the days, hours, and weeks following a death:

- ♦ **Anxiety or fear:** that something similar could happen to you, or to another friend or loved one.
- ♦ **Confusion:** about why the event happened, or what it means in the larger context of life.
- ♦ **Grief:** a pure, overwhelming sense of sadness or loss.
- ♦ **Anger:** anger at the person for dying; anger at whatever or whomever caused the death; anger at your God; anger or increased irritability in routine situations.
- ♦ **Abandonment:** feeling that you have been left by the person, particularly if there was no opportunity to say good-bye; feeling abandoned by your God or spiritual leader.
- ♦ **Frustration:** that you couldn't prevent the death from happening, or that the death happened at all.
- ♦ **Guilt or remorse:** guilt if you feel you could have done something to prevent the death, or even guilt related to feeling good (even momentarily) if you think you are supposed to continually feel bad.
- ♦ **Embarrassment:** feeling uncomfortable with your own or your friend's/ family's displays of grief; like you are more emotional than you should be.
- ♦ **Denial:** denial of either the emotions about your loss or about the loss itself.
- ♦ **Numbness:** a "lack of feeling" is a normal reaction to an immediate loss and should not be confused with "lack of caring".

When someone dies, your sense of innocence and immortality dies a bit too. Your life may feel different than it did before, and it may take you a while to fully process what happened.

Help Yourself

- ♦ **Respect your feelings.** Try to acknowledge and accept all of your feelings, both positive and negative. You may not feel comfortable with these feelings, but they are normal and expected.
- ♦ **Talk to others.** Telling the story of the loss can help some people. Others might not want to talk about it but will find comfort and security by simply spending time with someone who "gets it."
- ♦ **Listen to others.** Remember that you don't have to always respond with words.
- ♦ **Create a memorial, ritual, or take another form of action.** Often the act of doing something can help with processing feelings.
- ♦ **Record your thoughts.** Use a journal or blog to help process; draw or play music if it helps.
- ♦ **Accept help from others.** We're all in this together, so let others' presence, experience and wisdom guide you if you feel stuck or scared.
- ♦ **Allow yourself to cry.** Tears serve a dual purpose; they offer emotional and physical release.
- ♦ **Attend a community support group.** Groups provide an opportunity to share grief with others who have experienced similar loss.
- ♦ **Celebrate and honor life.** Death often serves to remind the living of what is truly important in life; to keep worry and negativity in perspective. Appreciate and celebrate all that is positive in your life.
- ♦ **Spend time in nature.** Experiencing the seasonal cycles reminds us that birth and death are constants in nature, and that each of us are part of the natural world.

Please see resources on following page

Seek Support If You...

- ... find that your feelings are persisting in ways that are uncomfortable and overwhelming.
- ... find that disturbing images are intruding into your waking or dreaming life.
- ... are using alcohol or other drugs, or other unhealthy coping mechanisms to handle the loss.
- ... have reactions that are getting in the way of doing what you need to do for school, work, or in relationships.
- ... are concerned about how a friend or family member is reacting.
- ... feel depressed or hopeless.

For Students

- ◆ Counseling at Cornell Health: health.cornell.edu/CAPS
- ◆ “Let’s Talk” drop-in consultation with a Cornell Health counselor: health.cornell.edu/LetsTalk
- ◆ Staff and chaplains from the Office of Spirituality and Meaning-Making (OSMM) and Cornell United Religious Work (CURW) are able to provide spiritual support at 607-255-4214 or osmm@cornell.edu.
- ◆ See more: caringcommunity.cornell.edu/get-help
- ◆ Local Talk/Crisis-line (24/7) 607-272-1616
- ◆ National Talk/Crisis-lines (24/7) 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- ◆ Trevor Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386 (LGBTQ)
- ◆ Text HELLO to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor
- ◆ Text STEVE to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor of color
- ◆ Text START to 678678 to connect with a confidential Trevor counselor (LGBTQ)
- ◆ National suicide prevention lifeline CHAT <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat>

For Faculty/Staff

- ◆ Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP): <https://fsap.cornell.edu/>
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- ◆ Trevor Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386 (LGBTQ)
- ◆ eni Confidential Counseling Services 1 (800) 327-2255

Local & National Grief Resources

- ◆ Hospicare of Ithaca: <https://www.hospicare.org/grief-support/resources/>
- ◆ National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization: <https://www.nhpco.org/patients-and-care-givers/grief-and-loss/grief-support/>
- ◆ American Psychological Association: guidance on [grief during COVID-19](#)
- ◆ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Grief and Loss](#)