

Coping with Grief: A Resource Guide

It is important to know there are ways to cope with grief and to support those who are grieving for personal loss and loss of loved ones. This guide provides information and resources to help in the grieving process.

Grief is natural, and most people are resilient

Grief is the natural human response to loss and it serves a useful purpose. It helps us accept that things are not the same anymore and we need to adapt. If we allow ourselves to feel the grief that accompanies a painful loss, that can help us heal, which is usually what happens. In fact, research shows that after a crisis passes, most people are able to bounce back and move on with their lives.

Common reactions to grief

In order to get through our grief, it can help to know what to expect. According to psychologists, people tend to fluctuate between different emotional states, moving in and out of disbelief and denial, anger and guilt, sadness and mourning, acceptance and even happiness. It is also helpful to be aware of more specific reactions to grief. Here are some of the most common ones:

Physical Reactions

- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Loss of appetite

Emotional Reactions

- Anger and irritability
- Grief and sadness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Apprehension

Cognitive Reactions

- Confusion
- Lack of concentration
- Recurrent thoughts
- Intrusive memory
- Hyper-vigilance

Behavioral Reactions

- Emotional outbursts
- Avoidance of others
- Impaired work performance
- Increased alcohol consumption
- Decreased interest in usual activities

SOURCE: Adapted from two sources: 1) Weir, K. (2020, April 1). *Grief and COVID-19: Mourning our Bygone Lives*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2020/04/grief-covid-19> 2) © 2011 ComPsych Corporation.

Do's and don'ts during the grief process*

People who experience grief may often demonstrate changes in behavior. These suggestions will help reduce the probability of chronic and prolonged grief:

Do:

- Get enough sleep.
- Maintain a regular diet.
- Maintain exercise regimen.
- Take one thing at a time.
- Talk to supportive people.
- Spend time with family/friends.*
- Expect the experience to upset you.
- Seek professional help if reactions persist.

Don't:

- Stay away from work.
- Withdraw from others.
- Increase caffeine intake.
- Reduce leisure activities.
- Make major life changes.
- Drink alcohol excessively.
- Take on new projects.
- Have unrealistic expectations.

*Please be advised – you may need to connect via phone, text or video chat with family and friends in order to maintain social distancing guidelines set by local authorities.

Emotional support for coping with grief

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

CopeColumbia

Providers and Clinical Staff – click on the link below and then scroll down to CopeColumbia:

<https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/coronavirus-resource-center/information-providers-and-clinical-staff>

Non-clinical Staff – click on the link below and then scroll down to CopeColumbia:

<https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/coronavirus-resource-center/information-non-clinical-staff>

To support our health care workers, the Department of Psychiatry at CUIMC, in partnership with ColumbiaDoctors and NewYork-Presbyterian, has developed services to provide psychological support and guidance for stress management and emotional fatigue arising from the COVID-19 crisis. These services are offered to CUIMC staff across all departments, and provide an opportunity for employees to talk about their experiences, ask questions and obtain some guidance and practical suggestions from our psychiatry faculty. Services are confidential and free of charge.

Services Offered:

- Peer Support Groups
- Individual Time with Psychiatry Faculty
- Town Halls

Pastoral Care at New York Presbyterian Hospital

Visit: <https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/pastoral-care>

Pastoral care is available to faculty, staff, and students through the services provided by staff at New York Presbyterian Hospital at the Columbia University Irving Medical Center campus and by the Office of the University Chaplain at Columbia's Morningside campus.

NYP Pastoral Care and Education: Spiritual and Emotional Support Messages

Visit: [These videos](#)

(The videos are on the NYP Infonet. To view them, Columbia employees will be prompted to input their credentials: CUIMC email and password).

In an effort to provide additional emotional and spiritual support to you, NYP has asked their multi-faith chaplains from their department of Pastoral Care and Education to provide spiritual messages in the major faith traditions of Roman Catholic, Protestant Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Non-denominational. The purpose of these videos is to give you a moment to reflect and to gain encouragement from your own tradition or from other religions. These videos are no more than five minutes in length and each hopefully will offer inspiration and spiritual sustenance.

Office of Mental Health Emotional Support Line

Call: 844-863-9314*

The Emotional Support Line provides free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the coronavirus emergency. The Help Line is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling.

*DISCLAIMER: The Office of Mental Health's ("OMH") Emotional Support Line ("Line") is not licensed or unlicensed mental health care or treatment of any type regardless of what is discussed or who provides support. It is for emotional support purposes only. Use of the Line does not create any confidential provider-therapist relationship of any type. The Line not a substitute for professional health care.

NYC Well

Visit: <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/>

NYC Well is available 24/7 for individuals to speak with a professional or peer counselor or confidential, non-judgmental emotional support, suicide prevention, crisis support, and help accessing mental health and substance abuse care.

Crisis Textline

Visit: <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Crisis Textline is a 24/7 text message hotline where real people are trained to respond to and de-escalate situations that they are texted about through active listening and collaborative problem solving. To access this resource, text HOME to 741741.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Visit: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat>

Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24/7 resource for free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-8355 or 1-800-799-4889 (TTY).

SAHMSA Disaster Distress Helpline

Visit: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

SAHMSA Disaster Distress Helpline provides immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster, pandemic (including COVID-19) etc. This helpline is available 24/7/365. Call 1-800-985-5990 (English and español) or 1-800-846-8517 (TTY)

COUNSELING SERVICES FOR COLUMBIA EMPLOYEES

Optum's Emotional Support Help Line

Call: 866-342-6892, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Optum's Emotional Support Help Line is available to anyone experiencing anxiety or stress related to COVID-19 or any other topic. Whether or not you have medical benefits through the University, employees can connect with a clinician who can evaluate and treat general mental health conditions and prescribe medications.* Locate providers through Live and Work Well's provider search. You can also schedule appointments online.

- Free
- Open to anyone

Support for substance use disorder: Connect via web-based chat through [LiveandWorkWell.com](https://www.liveandworkwell.com). You can also call to speak with a recovery advocate 24/7 by calling 855-780-5955.

*As needed and as per state law.

Employee Assistance Program (Humana)

Call: 888-673-1153 or visit [humana.com/eap](https://www.humana.com/eap) **Username:** Columbia; **Password:** eap

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to support you, with confidential access to professional counselors who will assess your needs, provide a listening ear, and connect you with the appropriate trained specialists and community resources. This is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at no additional cost to you. Benefit eligible employees and their dependents can receive 3 free counseling sessions per topic.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All contacts with counselors are confidential in accordance with federal, state and professional guidelines. No information will be shared without the written consent of the individual seeking assistance, unless the counselor is legally bound to take action.

COUNSELING SERVICES FOR SERVICE CORP EMPLOYEES

Employee Assistance Program (GuidanceResources)

Call: 800-697-0353 or visit www.guidanceresources.com using company **Web ID:** GEN311

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential counseling service to help address the personal issues you are facing. This service, staffed by experienced clinicians, is available by calling a toll-free phone line 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A Guidance Consultant is available to listen to your concerns and refer you to a local provider for in person counseling or to resources in your community. Call any time with personal concerns, including: depression, marital and family conflicts, stress and anxiety, alcohol and drug abuse, and grief and loss.

Care24 Services Program through United Healthcare

Call: 888-887-4114

Counselors are available to help you address a wide range of personal concerns such as emotional distress, relationship worries, anxiety, grief and much more.

Additional online resources for coping with grief

National Institute of Health – Coping with Grief

Visit: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/10/coping-grief>

The Center for Complicated Grief at Columbia School of Social Work

Visit: <https://complicatedgrief.columbia.edu/for-the-public/resources/>

Grief.com

Visit: <https://grief.com/>

Bereavement Resources

Leave Management Office

Phone: 212-851-0698

Email: leavemanagement@columbia.edu

LEGAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR COLUMBIA EMPLOYEES

Employee Assistance Program (Humana)

Call: 888-673-1153 or visit humana.com/eap **Username:** Columbia; **Password:** eap

Legal Services

You can receive free 30-minute consultations with attorneys. These attorneys can help you with a wide variety of concerns including: wills, trusts and estates, immigration matters, evictions, landlord/tenant disputes and many others. For more information about this benefit, you can also review the 2020 Officer Benefits Highlights: <https://humanresources.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Benefits/Highlights%20-%20Brochures/2020%20Benefits%20Highlights%20-%20Officers.pdf>

Financial Services

You can receive free 30-minute consultations with financial professionals. They can help with issues, such as bankruptcy, credit cards and loans, debt, estate planning, tax issues, and retirement planning.

LEGAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR SERVICE CORP EMPLOYEES

Employee Assistance Program (GuidanceResources)

Call: 800-697-0353 or visit www.guidanceresources.com using company **Web ID:** GEN311

Legal Services

When a legal issue arises, our attorneys are available to provide confidential support with practical, understandable information and assistance. If you require representation, you can also be referred to a qualified attorney in your area for a free 30-minute consultation with a 25% reduction in customary legal fees thereafter. Call anytime for legal issues including debt, landlord and tenant issues, bankruptcy, contracts and others.

Financial Services

You can receive free 30-minute consultations with financial professionals. They can help with issues, such as bankruptcy, credit cards and loans, debt, estate planning, tax issues, and retirement planning.