



Responding to Change and Loss

Loss comes in many forms and can be difficult to name. People can experience loss when their day-to-day routines and face-to-face interactions change. Loss can also be anything from a missed celebration to the loss of a loved one. Some losses are ambiguous, and can't always be easily recognized or processed, as they lack finality. We can even encounter multiple feelings of loss at once, and while we know some of these emotions will not last, we can still struggle with them.

Everyone has dealt with loss—and you may feel as though our loss is not as valid as others, or that you are not allowed to feel your grief because others are suffering more. You may also struggle with holding two opposing ideas at once—like feeling sad while also having a sense of hope.

Naming and validating your experiences, learning ways to understand the losses you are experiencing, and identifying ways to respond and ways to cope while supporting others are ways to help get through this health crisis. In supporting one another to navigate this time of uncertainty, and identifying ways to care for ourselves and our community, we can find it easier to cope with and accept our losses.

Tips

Identify and Validate Your Loss

- **Recognize what was lost.** Your loss can be a loss of routines, face-to-face interactions, a sense of safety or normalcy, social events, celebrations and holidays, privacy and boundaries, or simply freedom of movement.
- **Identify and name how you feel over these circumstances.** By putting in place concrete daily activities, you can create a sense of predictability for children that makes them feel safe. Some examples of these routines would be scheduling mealtime, playtime, school work, daily meals/family time, and breaks from TV.
- **Identify and name how you feel over these circumstances.** While a loss may just be temporary, you can still recognize and validate those feelings. Through naming and identifying, we can realize how collective our emotions are, allowing us to connect to others.
- **Using spirituality.** Your spirituality can help you validate your emotions. Many religious practices, while not accessible physically, are now available virtually. These can both help you connect with others and feed your spirit.
- **Know that it is natural and ok to hold onto several emotions.** You can feel negative emotions, but also still have hope and find joy in small things.
- **Allow yourself to grieve.** Everyone is allowed to grieve; don't try to create a hierarchy of suffering to pinpoint who is allowed to feel negative emotions during these times. No matter how small you may think your problems are, you are still allowed to feel that loss.
- **Make connections.** Connect to individuals who uplift you and give you a sense of peace during these times.

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Find Ways to Regain Control

- **Try making a new routine.** You can create a new semblance of control through your schedule. If your life has changed, try creating new routines to decrease stress.
- **Connect with others virtually.** You don't have to entirely isolate yourself if you can rely on technology to stay connected. Keep your social network going and check in with others to feel less alone.
- **Find new outlets.** Make art, learn a new skill, start a new hobby, or develop an exercise routine. Don't feel as though these activities need to be highly productive as long as they are enjoyable.
- **Adapt celebrations, events, and milestones.** Maybe you can't stage events the way you had originally planned, but you can still make the day feel special.
- **Practice social distancing and good hand hygiene.** Instead of feeling pressured and scared while following through with these precautions, think of it as an empowering move to flatten the curve and protect others as well.
- **Recognize what you have.** Think about what you are grateful for during this time. Make meaning and find hope in what you can knowing that this too will pass.
- **Embrace the things that matter the most to you.** Finding what is meaningful to you can keep you feel grounded, whether that be exercise or reaching out to support systems. Support others as well, uplifting others can give you a sense of purpose while also supporting your community.
- **Set limits and boundaries even though you are home.** Be honest with yourself enough to protect your mental health by setting limits in all areas including work, the news, and even with the people you are quarantined with.

Resources

What's Your Grief? (<https://whatsyourgrief.com/>)

Written from a personal and clinical view about loss this website, also has recommendations for activities and is interactive with its community.



The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (<https://www.nctsn.org/>)

NCTSN has a plethora of resources that can be used by everyone from children to parents and teachers.

Ambiguous Loss (<http://ambiguousloss.com/>) If you want to learn more about ambiguous loss.

Living With Worry And Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty (<https://www.psychologytools.com/articles/free-guide-to-living-with-worry-and-anxiety-amidst-global-uncertainty/>)

Provides information about normal and excessive worry, lots of normalization, and a selection of practical exercises that you can use to manage worry and maintain well-being in these uncertain times. Available in multiple languages.

Action for Happiness (<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars>)

A coping calendar is a calendar for daily activities to help you cope.

National Alliance for Grieving Children (<https://childrengrieve.org>)

Provides extensive resources about the needs of children and teens grieving a death and provide education and resources to anyone who wants to support them.

Coalition to Support Grieving Students (<https://grievingstudents.org/>)

The Coalition to Support Grieving Students is a great resource for school communities navigating a loss. They have materials that can help in speaking to children, caregivers, or school staff themselves.

By Crystal Gauen, LCAT, and Erin Huntley, LCAT

For more resources on coping with COVID-19, visit us at jewishboard.org/cv19resources