



**Mount
Sinai
Beth Israel**

A Bereavement Toolkit for MSBI Managers and Department Heads

What is this toolkit?

This toolkit is to help managers and other leaders support and comfort team members who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. It will also help you support grieving team members more generally and will help you access supportive services inside and outside MSHS.

We are all grieving

This is an unprecedented time for healthcare workers, whether we are on the frontlines or playing a support role elsewhere in the hospital or from our homes. For many of us, this is a traumatic time. We are seeing an exceptionally high death rate in our hospitals. We walk past mobile morgues to get to work. Our family and friends are ill and we may already have experienced losses in our own lives. We can't engage in our usual mourning practices. We can't do our typical self-care activities, go to our favorite places, or see our loved ones in person. We have family members who have lost their jobs or who are scared they will lose their jobs. We may be scared of getting sick ourselves or of making others sick, or we may be recovering from having been sick. No matter how hard we are working, we may be feeling guilty that we aren't doing enough. We may be remembering other losses we have experienced at other times in our lives.

We may be feeling sad, angry, powerless, afraid, overwhelmed, anxious, or numb.

Acknowledging our own experiences and reactions will help us support our staff, who are feeling these same things.

We are all at risk of complicated grief

Complicated grief can arise when...

- our grief is the result of a traumatic situation
- we experience multiple losses at the same time
- we are mourning COVID-19 losses in our own lives while also caring for patients who are sick with COVID-19
- we don't have time to mourn

This will be a long road – and there are things we can do now

As managers and leaders, we have the opportunity to care for our staff by acknowledging their losses and offering them support. This kind of care can be protective in the long-term.

Tips for making a condolence call to a bereaved staff member

- Be attuned to the power imbalance between managers and supervisees; check that this is a good time for your staff member to talk.
- Ask for the deceased person's name; ask about who they were as a person; invite your staff member to humanize their loved one for you.
- Talk less, listen more.
- Avoid open-ended offers of help. Instead of saying, "Let me know if I can do anything to help," ask, "Can I have food delivered to your home?"
- Remember that your staff member may be sick or quarantined and may have other sick family members.

MSHS bereavement leave policies

The Condolence Days policy and Absences with Pay policy are appended to the end of this document.

Condolence calls from an MSBI bereavement social worker or chaplain

If you would like an MSBI social worker or chaplain to make a condolence call to your staff member, call Jo Hirschmann, director of spiritual care, at 917-842-6091.

Consider this for staff who may benefit from an additional layer of emotional support. Consider requesting a call from a chaplain for staff who identify as religious/ spiritual and may appreciate a prayer/ blessing.

Connecting your staff member to MSHS counseling resources

If your staff member would like to speak to a counselor immediately or within the next few days, connect them to:

- **Mental Health Crisis Response Team, MSBI/ NYEE: 929-305-0181**
 - o Confidential 24/7 hotline for staff experiencing acute distress related to COVID-19 and needing urgent support, staffed by mental health professionals from the MSHS Department of Psychiatry
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP): 212-844-2273 or 212-241-8937**
 - o Confidential counseling and referrals for employees, available M-F 9-5 via phone or video.
 - o Messages will be responded to within 24 hours.

The services offered by the Mental Health Crisis Response Team and EAP are **confidential**.

You can learn more about staff support resources here:

<https://www.mountsinai.org/about/covid19/staff-resources>

Getting support for your team as a whole

If your team as a whole would benefit from comfort, care, and an opportunity to talk, consider reaching out to the following MSBI/ MSHS resources.

- Mental Health Liaisons

- “Mental Health PPE” – PPE for your mind and emotions. For all direct care and support service staff who are providing services to COVID+ patients.
- Confidential emotional support for individuals or groups delivered by trained mental health professionals from the MSHS Department of Psychiatry.
- MHL teams are assigned to specific units and are primarily available M-F 9-5 by text, email, or Zoom.
- You can get the names, cell phone numbers, and email addresses of the MHLs assigned to your unit from your unit leadership.

- Spiritual Care Department

- Chaplains can bring Chi Time, round in work areas, and lead memorial gatherings or services.

Connecting bereaved employees to support groups and other resources in the community

Please see the addendum to this document for a list of community counseling services and support groups. All of these organizations are currently offering remote services.

Support for staff who need financial assistance to pay for a funeral

Organization	Services offered and how to apply
NYC Human Resources Administration 718-473-8310 https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/burial-assistance.page	Low-income NYC residents may be eligible for up to \$900 in financial assistance to meet funeral expenses for a deceased low-income New York City resident family member or friend. NYC-HRA has a Burial Allowance Application Process: https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/benefits/burial_claim_app_en.pdf
Social Security Administration 800-772-1213 https://www.ssa.gov/planners/survivors/ifyou.html	The SSA offers a one-time death settlement in the amount of \$255 to the spouse/children of deceased. If the deceased was of retirement age, his/her spouse/children may be eligible to collect survivors' benefits as well. If you need to report a death or apply for survivors' benefits, call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778)

<p>Veterans Affairs (VA) 800-827-1000 https://www.ssa.gov/planners/survivors/ifyou.html</p>	<p>You may be able to get veterans' burial allowances if you're paying for the burial and funeral costs and you won't be reimbursed by any other organization, like another government agency or the veteran's employer. The funds are usually paid automatically to the surviving spouse as soon as the VA is notified of the death. If the surviving spouse is not paid, the spouse or family members may submit a claim: https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/</p>
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Bereavement Support Resources

Mount Sinai Bereavement Support Programs

Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute

Provides bereavement support to families and friends who have experienced the loss of a loved one. Short term in person support as well as telephone support is available. Referrals can be made to services within the community for additional and continued support during the mourning and grieving process. A twice annual (autumn and spring) memorial service is offered. Call 212-241-1446 for more information.

Community Bereavement Support Services

Ann's Place

203-790-6568

Email: info@annsplace.org

www.annsplace.org

80 Saw Mill Road, Danbury, CT

www.annsplace.org/ap_content/Tab-Support/FamilySupport.html

Currently offering online support group services until the end of May.

The Bereavement Center of Westchester

914-787-6158 x1317

www.bcwtreehouse.org

Scarsdale, NY

Offers a variety of programs to help individuals and families cope with the death of a significant person in their life. Offering phone and online sessions.

Calvary Hospital

718-518-2173 (Bronx, NY) / 917-680-2510 (Brooklyn, NY)

Bereavement groups available to people regardless of whether or not their family member was treated at Calvary. All groups are free of charge. Bereavement support is available for parents, spouses, siblings, adult children, and teenagers. Spanish speaking groups are available in the Bronx and in Brooklyn.

Cancer Care

800-813-HOPE (4673)

www.cancercare.org/tagged/grief_and_loss

275 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY

Individual and group bereavement support as well as online support programs available.

Literature about relationship specific loss is available on their website. Offering both phone and online support.



Bereavement Support Resources

Center for Bereavement

212-289-8570

Email: Center Director Mary Sussillo, LCSW; ms@centerforbereavement.com

www.centerforbereavement.com

118 East 93 Street, Suite 1C, New York, NY

Offering phone sessions for individual counseling related to bereavements.

The Center for Loss and Renewal

212-874-4711

Email: info@lossandrenewal.com

www.lossandrenewal.com

168 West 86th Street, #1D, New York, NY

Offering online video counseling.

The Complicated Grief Program

Columbia University (School of Social Work, Dept of Psych, University College of Physicians and Surgeons)

212-851-2107

www.complicatedgrief.org

Providing free webinars on "Loss and Grief During the Corona Virus Pandemic."

The Cope Foundation

516-364-COPE (2673)

www.copefoundation.org

COPE (Connecting Our Paths Eternally) is a non-profit grief and healing organization dedicated to helping parents, siblings, and families living with the loss of a child. The COPE Line 516-364-COPE (2673) is available seven days a week for immediate telephone support.

Diocese of Rockville Center

516-678-5800 ext 224

www.drvc-faith.org/bereavement

The family ministry office provides ongoing support to individuals and parishes by maintaining a list of resources for bereavement support groups, counselors, conferences, workshops, and other events to assist the bereaved. They are also offering webinars related to bereavement.

Gilda's Club Worldwide

212-647-9700



Bereavement Support Resources

www.gildasclubnyc.org

195 West Houston Street, New York, NY

Offering all bereavement groups online, as well as virtual events related to loss and grief.

GrievingCenter.org

www.grievingcenter.org

Email: info@grievingcenter.org

A web based television channel that deals with issues of loss. It features videos, articles, music, celebrity interviews and conversations with bereavement counselors as well as a forum where people can blog their own experiences.

Hospice Care Network

516-832-7100

www.hospicecarenetwork.org

Serves Nassau, Suffolk, and Queens Counties, NY

Offers phone contact and phone counseling, short term individual counseling, supportive mailings; group counseling: eight week "Coping with Grief" support program for varying ages and losses and the twelve week "Living with Grief" educational support program.

Meridian Health in New Jersey

www.meridianhealth.com/service/cancer-care/prevention-education/support-groups.aspx

Bereavement support groups are offered at three locations:

- Ocean Medical Center on first and third Monday of each month at 7pm, call 732-836-4573 to register
- Meridian at Home Hospices South offers a six week program, call 609-607-6156 to register
- Bayshore Community Hospital on second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm, call 732-739-5888 to register.

Modern Loss

Modernloss.com

Modern Loss is an online forum where people share the unspeakably taboo, unbelievably hilarious, and unexpectedly beautiful terrain of navigating your life after a death. Everyone is welcome to read and to send in their stories for potential publication.

Service Program for Older Persons (SPOP) Widowed Persons Service (WPS)

212-787-7120 ext. 520

www.spop.org/services/bereavement-support

302 West 91 Street, New York, NY



Bereavement Support Resources

Free individual and group bereavement support services provided by clinical social workers and trained volunteers who themselves have experienced a loss. Groups are offered for adults of all ages, in either spousal/partner loss or non-spousal/partner loss. Initial interview required.

The Shira Ruskay Center: The Jewish Board of Family & Children Services (JBFCS)'s Jewish Bereavement Support Group Program

212 399-2685 ext. 211 / 212-632-4608 (JBFCS)

jewishboard.org/resources/bereavement-support

135 West 50th Street, 6th Floor New York, NY

Bereavement services are also available in Riverdale

Several loss specific bereavement support groups are offered that are individualized for specific types of loss, and for various Jewish cultural, spiritual, and religious needs. Attempts are made to have groups that are similar in age.

Visiting Nurse Service of New York – Bereavement Program

212-609-1900

Email: bereavement@vnsny.org

www.vnsny.org/how-we-can-help/hospice-palliative-care/our-services/grief-support/

Bereavement support programs are available in all five boroughs and are customized to address the unique needs of children, teens, and adults, including those who have lost parents, partners and spouses, or siblings. Educational sessions on specific topics are held periodically.

Westchester Jewish Community Services

914-761-0600 ext 142 or grittmaster@wjcs.com for Gillian Rittmaster, Bereavement Coordinator

www.wjcs.com/jewish-community/bereavement-services

Bereavement counseling is available for individuals and families. Online individual grief counseling and loss specific groups are available.

THE MOUNT SINAI HEALTH SYSTEM, NEW YORK STANDARD: POLICY	SUBJECT NO. HR-03.13
DEPARTMENT: HUMAN RESOURCES SUBJECT: CONDOLENCE DAYS	

Original Date Issued: 11/1970

Date Last Reviewed:	11/2002	02/2013	07/2018				
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The following statements describe the Medical Center's condolence day's policy. All medical Center employees receive Condolence Days, which are not affected by PTO.

A. After 30 days of employment, employees are entitled to condolence days in the event of the death of a parent, spouse, child, brother, sister, grandparent, father-in-law or mother-in-law as follows.

1. Regular Full-Time Employees: These employees are entitled to receive three (3) days off with pay.

2. Regular Part-Time Employees: Employees who are scheduled to work more than 1/5th of the regular full-time work week for their job classification are entitled to condolence days on a pro- rata basis.

3. Regular and Temporary Part-Time Employees: Employees who are scheduled to work 1/5th or less of the regular workweek receive no paid condolence days.

B. Upon request, this payment is made at the employee's straight time rate on a pro-rata basis for the hours that would normally be scheduled for those days.

C. Such three (3) days must be taken consecutively within a reasonable time (30 days) of the day of death or day of the funeral and may not be split or postponed.

NOTE: Please refer to the relevant bargaining unit agreement for details regarding condolence days for bargaining unit employees.

This policy supersedes any previous policy or policies published on the subject matter it treats. Mount Sinai Health System reserves the right to revise or revoke this policy, at any time, and in any lawful manner, without prior notice.

THE MOUNT SINAI HEALTH SYSTEM, NEW YORK STANDARD: POLICY	SUBJECT NO. BI SLW-3003
DEPARTMENT: HUMAN RESOURCES SUBJECT: ABSENCES WITH PAY	

Date Last Reviewed:	05/2005	04/2007	08/2011	02/2016	04/2016	04/2018	8/1/2018
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Policy:

Non-union, regular employees who are scheduled to work at least part-time are eligible for certain paid absences. Part-time employees are eligible for pro-rated paid absences. Per Diem and temporary employees are not eligible for paid absences.

Union members are eligible for paid certain absences pursuant to the terms and conditions of their respective collective bargaining agreement.

Procedure:

- Employees are eligible for paid absences after completing thirty days of employment.
- Whenever possible, employees must schedule and submit requests for any paid absences in advance with their supervisor.
- Employees may be required to produce official documentation for the absences listed below.

Paid absences are provided as follows:

Type of absence from regularly scheduled workdays	Entitlement (in days)	Comments
Marriage/ Civil Union Days	Three	The three days must be taken consecutively either immediately before or after the wedding/civil union.
Family Illness Days	Three	Employees may use up to three of their earned PTO days per calendar year to care for a sick family member. Family member is defined as child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, sibling or grandparent.
Birth, Adoption or placement of a foster child	One	Paid to the employee (parent) who is NOT on a medical leave at the time his/her child is born, adopted or placed.
Jury Duty	Varies	See HR Policy: Jury Duty #03.14
Death in Family	Three	Must be taken consecutively, within a reasonable period from the date of the death of a family member. Family member is defined as child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, grandparent, mother-in-law or father-in-law.

This policy supersedes any previous policy or policies published on the subject matter it treats. Mount Sinai Health System reserves the right to revise or revoke this policy, at any time, and in any lawful manner, without prior notice.

- In accordance with the New York Department of Consumer Affairs, the Hospital shall grant employee requests for temporary schedule changes when needed for certain medical and family care purposes.

The Hospital shall grant such requests twice per calendar year for up to one business day per request, or once per calendar year for two business days for a single request.

Qualifications:

All employees who work 80+ hours per calendar year in NYC and who have been employed by their employer 120 or more days

Definitions:

Temporary change: A “temporary change” means an adjustment to an employee’s usual schedule. This can include: using short-term unpaid leave, paid time off, working remotely, or swapping or shifting working hours.

Personal event: A “personal event” can be any of the following:

- The need to care for a child under the age of 18
- The need to care for a “care recipient,” a person with a disability who is a family or household member and relies on the employee for medical care or to meet the needs of daily living
- The need to attend a legal proceeding or hearing for public benefits to which the employee, a family member, or the employee’s minor child or care recipient is a party

Family Member:

- Child (biological, adopted, foster child; legal ward; child of an employee standing in loco parentis)
- Grandchild
- Spouse
- Domestic Partner
- Parent
- Grandparent
- Child or Parent of an employee’s spouse or domestic partner
- Sibling (including a half, adopted, or step sibling)
- Any other individual related by blood to the employee