



**Mount
Sinai**

These past few weeks have been incredibly difficult for so many of us. For some of us, that may be because we have lost a loved one, a patient, or know someone who has lost someone dear to them.

Grief is the normal human reaction after experiencing a loss. Often, we associate grief with one feeling, that of sadness. However, grief is actually an expression of multiple emotions. These multiple emotions may not be experienced in any particular order, and often may occur at the same time. Below are some of the many emotions experienced with grief, and some thoughts about what might help in approaching them:

- **Denial/Shock**– When we first learn of a loss, shock, numbness, and disbelief may be our initial reaction. Not wanting to face the reality of a situation is a way we sometimes protect ourselves from the painful reality of having lost someone close to us. It is okay to face this reality at your own pace.
- **Guilt**– As we begin to accept the reality of a loss, we may start to blame ourselves. We may start thinking of how we could have changed the outcome of this event. Blaming ourselves may actually be another way that we protect ourselves from a painful reality. It allows us to feel as if we could have changed an outcome - to feel more in control. But, guilt can weigh heavily on us and make the grieving process more complicated. If you can, try to take a step away and consider whether you are distorting reality by perhaps needlessly blaming yourself.
- **Anger**– Another way of coping with the loss of a loved one is to feel anger. Anger is an uncomfortable emotion that at times is experienced towards others. It is important to be aware of this feeling, and like other negative emotions, not judge that feeling, but rather try to understand the origin of the anger and process this emotion, ideally by talking about what has upset you. Try not to confront someone when in a moment of anger. Give yourself some time to think about what has upset you and you may even find that after a few days, you are no longer angry.
- **Sadness**– Profound sadness may set in and you feel empty, heavy, slow, and foggy. You may have trouble with your appetite and sleep, and not want to do anything. Allow yourself the time and space to feel sad. It is ok to cry - If you feel like crying, doing so could be a much needed emotional release.
- **Fear**– Losing someone will undoubtedly make us think of our own mortality and that of our loved ones. This is a normal and common experience. Reach out to someone who will lend an ear and who will help you reality-check your fears.



While grieving it may also be helpful to remember that:

- Grief is a normal and appropriate response after a loss. While grieving, it may feel as though the agony will never end. But for most people, the intensity of these feelings will eventually wax and wane and lessen over time.
- Grief is not a stable state, rather it evolves and can be processed like any other emotion.
- Often we can feel opposite emotions at the same time. Even while grieving we may have moments of joy. It is ok to feel these two feelings at the same time. Feeling some joy during a sad period is normal and ok to feel.
- While grieving we may also experience physical expressions of mourning such as increased stomach aches and headaches. During this period, it is important to pay attention not only to your emotional health, but your physical health as well.
- There is no right way or correct order in which to grieve. People grieve differently and your grieving process is unique and personal.

If you would like support in dealing with grief or any other difficult emotion, please feel free to reach out to one of the many support services that you can find here:

<https://www.mountsinai.org/about/covid19/staff-resources/well-being/psychosocial-support>