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## The COVID19 PANDEMIC – the effects of loneliness and social isolation through the grieving process



Cry whenever you need to.  
Scream. Shout. Lay on the floor. Sob in the shower. Be still. Run. Walk. Create. Live your truth. Share without fear. Listen. Release your pain. Breathe. Be courageous. Throw away the map. Wander. Be real. Be compassionate. Read. Seek friendship. Be vulnerable. Don't fear being broken.

-Zoe Clark-Coates

*"Grief never ends, but it changes; it's a passage, not a place to stay. The sense of loss must give way if we are to value the life that was lived. Grief is not a sign of weakness, It is the price of caring"*

Loneliness and isolation are significant challenges for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic.



### Coping with COVID-19

Take breaks from the news



Take care of your body

Make time to unwind



Connect with others

Set goals and priorities



Focus on the facts



## GRIEF DURING COVID-19

Mourning the loss of those we love is painful and lonely during normal times. However, one of the particular challenges for those who are grieving in this 'new normal' of COVID-19 pandemic, is that increasing numbers of people and households are being told to self-isolate or to socially distance themselves from friends and families. This makes our already difficult days become even more distressing.

We, as members of the 'The Bereavement Café' would like to encourage you that whatever the emotional pain and challenges you are faced with during your grief journey, remember that God sees your struggles, catches your tears, feels your pain, hears your prayers and says through the prophet Isaiah, "I will sustain you and I will rescue you" (Isaiah 46).

## OTHER SCRIPTURE VERSES FOR GRIEF AND LONELINESS

- Isaiah 41:10
- Psalm 147: 3
- Psalm 56:8
- Psalm 23:4
- Matthew 5:4



## HEALING PRAYERS & SCRIPTURES

### PRAYER FOR HIS HEALING

*"Father God, my heart is overcome by loneliness and isolation, so I am seeking shelter beneath your wings.*

*As I come before You, I know that I should speak words to express the anguish in my heart, but my anguish spills out freely through my tears.*

*May my tears speak loudly where my words fail me? Draw me into the warmth of Your presence and whisper healing words to my spirit.*

*Be my refuge and heal the pain of my loneliness with Your everlasting love. Lord, I thank you for hearing and answering my prayers in Jesus Name. Amen.*

### GRIEF AND ISOLATION

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered everyone's daily lives, including how people grieve the loss of a loved one.

## Grief Can Be An Isolating Experience

*"Healing grief can be an overwhelming and lonely experience...we often feel like we don't have the tools to overcome the feelings that devastate us."*



## GRIEF AND ISOLATION

In recent times when we lose a loved one, we

**Grief left alone  
Remains  
The same  
Grief mixed  
With love and  
Memories  
Allows  
Hope to enter**

could always seek face to face support from our friends and family which proves to be a helpful way of coping. Nowadays however, the restrictions to social isolate and keeping distance to avoid spreading of the virus means that we face our grief with loneliness and in isolation.

### Grieving while being alone can mean that:

- You are less able to receive face-to-face support from friends and family, potentially leading to a greater sense of isolation and loneliness.
- Your feelings of loneliness and grief are stronger.
- You might have to stay by yourself in a house you shared with the person who has died. This can bring up painful memories.
- If you are living with a family in the same house, you may be able to support each other; but sometimes being together all the time can lead to tension or arguments.

## COPING STRATEGIES!

- It is harder to deal with your grief because everyone is also worried about the coronavirus situation.
- You may be left without someone to share your feelings with, or to help you with meals and shopping.

There's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to grief; and I don't think there's anyone who knows exactly the right answer for how to amend this process for social distancing and the other shockwaves radiating from this pandemic.

The Bereavement Cafe acknowledges that right now, it can feel like there is no escape from grief and loss. It is everywhere around us in public life, in the media and in everyday conversations. This can make your own private grief feel even more intense and inescapable. We are therefore suggesting some coping strategies to help you reduce the feelings of loneliness.

## COPING STRATEGIES

### Be creative

- If you love eating dinner with friends or family, schedule video calls for mealtimes.
- If you find it difficult to talk, then journaling can be a helpful outlet for your emotions.

### Memory activities you can do independently

- If you can't get to the cemetery, find a place in your home where you can light a

candle, have a photograph and remember the person who died.

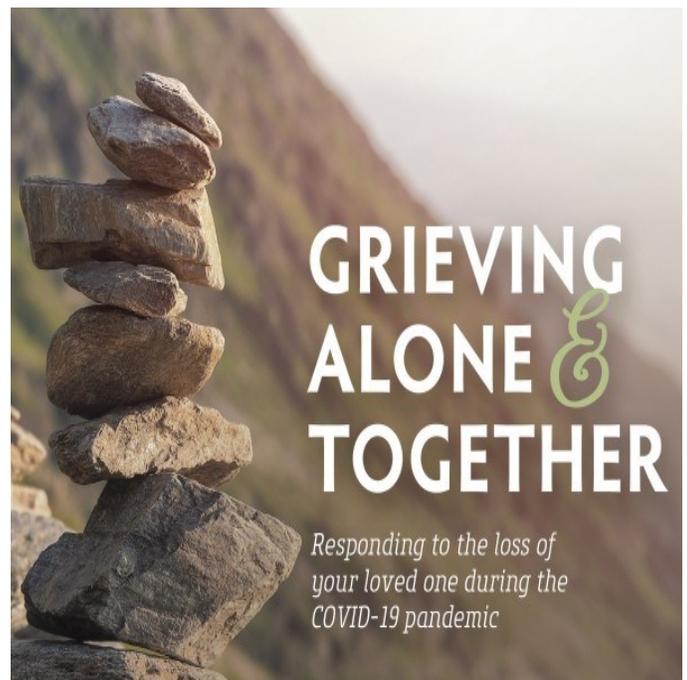
- Make a photo album or put together a scrapbook of your favourite memories of your loved one.
- Make a playlist of favourite music.

### Get exercise and fresh air

- If you can, try to get outside either in the garden if you have one, take a short walk, or try an online exercise class which can all help your wellbeing, decrease stress and anxiety and your mood. Also, make sure that you look after yourself and rest, don't feel guilty if you are struggling.

### Stay connected

- Don't let social distancing prevent you from getting the support you need.
- Use phone calls, text messages, video chats and social media to stay in touch with family and friends who are positive



## MORE COPING STRATEGIES!

and supportive.

- Reach out to those in similar situations.

### Create an adapted routine

- This can help preserve a sense of order and purpose despite how much things may have changed. In addition to work or online learning, include activities that might help you cope, such as exercise, workshops, games or hobbies.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule and try to maintain a healthy diet.

### You can also:

- Identify your loneliest times of the day, then think about 2 or 3 things you can do during those times which might help you get through.
- Ask a trusted neighbour or local friend to meet you outside with the appropriate social distancing in place so you can have some face-to-face conversation.
- Take Time out for Prayer and meditate on the Word of God
- **Allow** yourself to grieve, to feel all the pain, regrets, guilt, anger, and sadness. Get your feelings out, express them and let them free to free you.

**If at any time you're finding it difficult to cope with the process of grief, loneliness or isolation, please contact your GP or seek other professional support (a list of which is provided opposite).**

Remember that grief is not only a road you travel alone, it is also a lonely road. Know that lonely feelings are normal and they will dissipate over time.

Remember also that learning to cope with grief is an experience as unique as you are. There is no right or wrong way to manage it, but it is important to recognise how you feel and do things that will help you.

Remember to be kind and compassionate to yourself and to reach out for support whenever you need it.

## HELP!

### Christian Counsellor:

If you need the support of a Christian counsellor, you can contact:

- Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC)

Visit the ACC website homepage [www.acc-uk.org](http://www.acc-uk.org) Click on 'Find a Counsellor', then scroll down the page and enter your postcode for a list of counsellors in your area.

You could Telephone **024 7644 9694** and someone will guide you through the process.

### Bereavement Support

- ✦ **Samaritans Helpline:**  
08457 909090, 24 hours a day
- ✦ **Cruse Bereavement Care:**  
0808 808 1677
- ✦ **Bereavement Trust Helpline:**  
0800 435 455, from 6-10pm
- ✦ [www.wntcg.org/bereavement](http://www.wntcg.org/bereavement)
- ✦ [www.wntcg.org/care](http://www.wntcg.org/care)