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Finding Comfort *in uncertain times*

People who are grieving can be especially vulnerable to outside stressors such as uncertainty caused by COVID-19. Staying positive, daily connection with others, and regaining a sense of control in our lives can help ease distress and isolation.

Here are some ideas to successfully move through these changing times:

- **Stay calm.** Focus on the positive. Remind yourself this is a temporary situation and do what you can to assist others in a safe way.
- **Have a daily plan.** Whether you are working from home or not working during this outbreak, organize your time and keep your schedules as normal as possible, so life can still feel manageable.
- **Maintain your environment.** Keeping things orderly in your personal world counters feeling of helplessness. Do things that give you a sense of control. Clean a cupboard. Make your lunch and eat it on schedule.
- **Manage anxiety as it occurs.** Thought stopping can be an effective technique to prevent our imaginations from spiraling out of control.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** This is very important. Empty calories do not give you the healthy fuel you need to feel good. They can bog down your system and weaken your emotional immunity. Be aware that alcohol significantly lowers physical immunity. Find alternative ways of relaxing.
- **Breathe.** To stay calm and centered, breathe in short bursts through your nose for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 6, and slowly release for a count of 8. Do this hourly for a few minutes or whenever you're anxious.
- **Exercise.** Exercise is a must to help manage stress, depression or anxiety. Your body's natural serotonin is one of nature's most important mood stabilizers. Research shows even a short brisk walk can effectively manage depression.
- **Listen to uplifting music.** Whatever genre you enjoy, play music, sing along and dance a little. It's a great way to fit in a little exercise and lift your spirits.
- **Find your positive voice.** Watch your narrative. Our thoughts tend to be more negative when we are hurt and grieving. Connect with positive people. Read, watch programs and find uplifting stories to engage your mind.
- **Don't isolate.** Isolation is a huge trigger when grieving. Call, text or email at least two people daily to avoid negativity and maintain social connections. Everyone benefits.

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- **Embrace the extra time you gain through social distancing.** Choose to be creative. Enjoy your current hobby or create a new one. Take advantage of YouTube or other social media to learn something new. Spend time with pets and pamper yourself.
- **Limit how much you talk about the virus.** Don't let it become the focal point of conversations and take command of your entire day. Set limits on news watching. Stay informed but do normal activities.
- **Follow all safety recommendations from the CDC.** Just do your best with current information and follow recommendations from medical experts.
 - [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html)
 - azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-home
- **Don't collapse.** When we're emotionally overwhelmed or panicking, our fight/flight trauma response kicks in. To center yourself, create a schedule, put things on paper, engage in a project, organize a meal or a family activity.
- **Do a spiritual reset.** Instead of getting lost in uncertainty, realize that all we really know about is today. Challenge yourself to appreciate "living in the moment." Practice mindfulness or short meditations to help you focus on the present. hov.org/our-care/mindfulness
- **Consider fostering an animal.** Fostering a dog or cat is a great way to decrease isolation. Many shelters are providing food and incidentals to make this an easy process.
- **Start or keep a gratitude journal or notepad.** Before going to bed, write down 1–2 things you are grateful for. Let those thoughts lull you to sleep — relax into them. Do not succumb to a nightcap unless it's a warm, caffeine-free drink.

Here are some resources you might find helpful, interesting and empowering:

- opentohope.com
- youtube.com/user/opentohope
- voiceamerica.com/show/1053/open-to-hope
- griefhealing.com
- griefhealingblog.com
- whatsyourgrief.com
- youtube.com/channel/UCoXVj6g40qsv-ZL5rVDFRiQ
- grief.com
- m.dailygood.org
- dailygood.org