

# Responding to Change and Loss During COVID-19



Many people are currently experiencing significant changes brought about by COVID-19. You might be feeling distracted, angry, scared, or just trying your best to manage a daily list of immediate worries. This is a normal human response to abnormal circumstances. As COVID-19 continues to disrupt our lives, it is important to acknowledge that we are experiencing the collective loss of certainty and security.

Crisis is a time of change that is temporary and can lead to a person feeling stress, tension, and disorganisation. These emotions can have a big impact on a person's ability to overcome daily obstacles or take in information, as it can be incredibly hard to concentrate. For some, there may also be a strong sense of feeling immobilised by the event. While crisis is different for everyone, it is seen as a turning point in a person's life where their usual ways of coping may not be as effective as they usually are, and where they are pushed to find new strategies to manage.

The virus has brought with it a sense that the world we live in has changed and will remain changed in some way. It is helpful to focus on how the COVID-19 crisis may have changed things for you and the emotional response that you are having to these events. Think about the:

- **External Factors:** What changes have occurred to your personal, social and economic circumstances?
- **Internal Factors:** Personal reactions and perceptions to the crisis, and how you have adapted and experienced this crisis situation.

There are restrictions on the things we usually do, such as our daily activities and routines that bring about freedom, joy, purpose, happiness, or connectedness. Normal life can feel temporarily lost and may involve unemployment, financial instability, and a disrupted home life. The future can feel uncertain, the plans you made put on hold. These are serious losses. It is important to acknowledge and name the associated feeling of grief. It is also important to take a moment to acknowledge that you are not alone in feeling it.

There might be times when you feel grief about COVID-19 strongly and deeply, and other times where you don't feel it so much. There is no set way to experience grief. Your response can change and fluctuate on a daily basis. Check out the 'Naming and Claiming Grief Self-Reflection Fact sheet'.

While the stages of grief identified below often happen, there is not set or linear way of experiencing them:

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Sadness
- Acceptance



There is power in accepting and acknowledging the things you have control over. Rather than avoiding our feelings of grief, we can acknowledge them and tolerate them. We can also accept that while we cannot control that COVID-19 is happening, we can find ways to proceed and cope.

- **Acceptance:** I can wash my hands, I can maintain a safe distance from others, I can keep in contact with others over the internet or phone, I can try to maintain a routine, I can still savour the activities I enjoy from home.
- **Meaning:** I am not as isolated as I feel, I can connect through technology and the internet. I will handle this. I want to learn from it and grow. I can keep trying.

Most of us have never experienced anything like this, but many of us have been through challenging experiences before. You have skills and strengths that have helped you heal and recover in the past. It is important to recognise that most people will be resilient and bounce back, once a crisis has passed.

If you are feeling, socially distanced from those around you, overwhelmed or as though you cannot cope, please seek some support:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14 or visit [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- Beyond Blue: Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636 or visit [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
- Samaritans: 13 52 46
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467