Grief and CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Grief is a natural response to loss. As we continue to navigate life during the COVID-19 pandemic, loss is being experienced in many ways. There is no right way to grieve and grieving takes time.

**TYPES OF GRIEF**

- **Primary loss** includes loss of a loved one or a major life change (loss of a job, divorce, homelessness, etc.)
- **Secondary loss** may not be obvious and could include a perceived or real loss of freedom, loss of companionship, support services, recreational, school and spiritual activities, family gatherings, etc.
- **Anticipatory loss** may appear with the anticipation of an unknown future such as someone who has a family member who has COVID-19 and/or COVID-19 complications.

**SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF**

Grief manifests itself in emotional/psychological symptoms as well as physical symptoms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional/Psychological</th>
<th>Physical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disbelief</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble accepting the loss</td>
<td>Nausea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Trouble breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Weight loss/weight gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of guilt</td>
<td>Aches and pains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Difficulty falling or staying asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social withdrawal</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty concentrating and thinking clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings of disconnectedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERENCES**

[1] covid19.mcw.edu

May 8, 2020
Grief and CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH LOSS

- Acknowledge your pain
- Be kind to yourself
- Exercise regularly, eat healthy and practice good sleep habits
- Honor your loss
- Focus on healing
- Accepting help
- Ask for support
- Engage in activities that bring you joy/peace
- Keep a journal
- Talk to those who bring comfort when you’re ready
- Seek support from family, close friends, spiritual leaders, therapists, etc.
- When others reach out, be honest and clear

WHEN TO GET HELP
Reach out to a licensed professional if you feel any of the following:

- Feeling like life isn’t worth living/thoughts of suicide
- Wishing you had died with your loved one
- Guilt over the loss or for failing to prevent it
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Difficulty trusting others
- Unable to perform your normal daily activities
- Difficulty planning for the future and feeling that life is unbearable

WHERE TO GET HELP

- Adult telehealth services through MCW Psychiatry - call 414-955-8900
- Child telehealth services through MCW Child Psychiatry - call 414-266-2932
- For grief counseling and other community resources, dial 211
- In the U.S.: Crisis Call Center at 775-784-8090

Sources: National center for PTSD, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, The Center for Complicated Grief, Harvard Medical School Special health Report, Mental Health of America Wisconsin

May 8, 2020

covid19.mcw.edu