

NOMC'S TIPS FOR COPING WITH GRIEF DURING COVID-19

Some of us have experienced the ultimate loss of one dear to us during this pandemic. This has been compounded by social distancing, which does not allow for visitation at the hospital, or for the normal means of honoring a loved one's life with friends and family as we mourn.



Janet E. Johnson,
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Others of us have lost gigs, jobs, and the ability to celebrate life's milestones such as birthdays, graduations and weddings. Our routines and daily lives have been disrupted and we have lost our sense of normal. This all adds up to a profound sense of loss and grief.

We are in this together. We are each experiencing grief for what is unique and meaningful to us. We are experiencing a collective grief as a culture and as a nation. We all feel grief about what may come just around the corner.

Feelings of anxiety, anger, stress, sadness, fatigue and fear are all normal in these times. It is okay to let yourself experience them, but not to immerse yourself in them.

BE AWARE: Thoughts of self-harm, suicide or a preoccupation with death are **NOT** a normal part of grief and ALWAYS warrant intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1.800.273.8255

Metropolitan Human Services District (24/7)

504.826.2675

Text HOME to 74174

SpeakingofSuicide.com/resources

While there is no right way to grieve, the famous psychiatrist Dr. Kubler-Ross wrote about 5 stages of grief that we experience. People do not go through the stages in order nor does everyone go through every stage. It may help you process your grief if you think of these 5 stages:



DENIAL



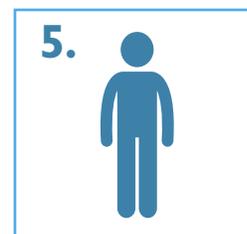
ANGER



BARGAINING



DEPRESSION



ACCEPTANCE

DENIAL & BARGAINING



Many of us were understandably in denial when the news of the COVID-19 pandemic was first talked about after Mardi Gras. This eventually gave way to disbelief as the extent of the changes for our lives first became clear in mid-March. Shock soon gave way to *bargaining*—"If I can follow a regimine, everything will go back to the way it was."



With our city's mounting death toll, denial is dangerous. It can put your health and others at risk. It is vital that we continue to social distance, hand-wash, wear masks and take care of ourselves and others.

ANGER AND DEPRESSION



We have all felt levels of anger, frustration and depression at multiple points throughout the past weeks of social isolation. All that we knew as our pre-Mardi Gras normal is on hold, or may never return exactly as before.



Finding healthy ways to cope with our anger and depression are crucial but admittedly can be challenging in these times.

FORMING ROUTINE DURING SOCIAL DISTANCING



Find something positive each day; look for joy however small.



Establish a comfortable new routine for now.



Keep a regular bedtime and awakening time.



Connect with family and friends (*phone/text/zoom/FaceTime/other video apps*). Plan for post-social distancing activities to do as they become available.



Take a walk. Get fresh air. Move your body. Have a playlist of music that gives you pleasure.



When possible, nourish your body, mind and spirit with fresh, healthy foods and keep regular meal times.

We are New Orleans. We are resilient. Together we will fest, eat crawfish and dance in the streets again. And with a twinkle in our eyes, we will forge a new normal.



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As a psychiatrist specializing in trauma recovery who has worked with Mercy Corps in China and Haiti, Dr. Johnson has been one of the NOMC's vital advisors and providers since Hurricane Katrina when she founded a non-profit organization, "Project Rising Sun" to provide therapeutic drumming circles and mental health screenings for our musicians' community.