



FAMILIES TACKLING TOUGH TIMES TOGETHER



We Share Our Feelings Constructively! Open Emotional Expression

Grief and loss are all around us during this pandemic. Loss of life, events, freedoms, and being around loved ones. It is important to allow yourself and your family to grieve these losses. We can also use these losses as a way to share feelings with others. As we grieve, it's natural for many people to want to connect with others. These connections are an important part of the grief process and help us to feel closeness with one another in the midst of loss. Memories of things that once were bring a positive break to the emotions associated with loss. As a community, it is valuable to find creative ways to connect when we cannot connect in person. [Communal grief](#) can be especially impactful during this time. Communal grief allows us to experience grief with others and share reactions to loss with friends, family, neighbors, and even strangers. [Read more about declaration of values for communal grief.](#)

These activities focus on strategies to grieve together for those in a community. During times of crisis it can be therapeutic for people to feel as though they are connected to others who are experiencing similar losses. Resilience is fostered in a community when its members understand that they are not alone, but part of a connected whole.

Project Reach Out!

- Consider developing a phone tree for those who need someone to talk to. Phone trees help people to share information, resources, or provide a much-needed outlet for sharing emotions. Make a list of those you wish to reach out to in your community (church members, neighborhood friends, co-workers, etc.). Recruit a group of people who are willing to make regular phone calls to those on the list. Encourage group members to add to the list as they think of those they'd like to include. Arrange for each group member to make weekly phone calls to a selected number of people on the list. These calls can be simple "wellness calls" or can consist of leaving a brief, uplifting message. Youth may wish to join the phone tree by reaching out to those who prefer a weekly check-in text. Encourage group members to be aware that those they call may be feeling a variety of different emotions. It is important to consider the emotions of each person called and to offer support, as possible.

Photo Sharing

- Photos can be a great way to share our feelings and help make meaning of the challenges we are facing. Consider organizing or joining a Facebook group such as [View from My Window](#). Invite community members to join and post weekly photos of the view from their own window. Encourage a photo caption that communicates how the view makes them feel. For example, "This is the view from my window today. It brings me happiness to see flowers growing in my garden" or "This is the view from my window today. When I see people taking walks and talking to one another it makes me anxious about getting out and staying safe." Reassuring comments from others should be encouraged to support those who may be feeling down.

Additional Resources

- [Role of Community Support in Grief Management](#)
- [The Grief Library](#) features a list of resources to help guide you and others during the grieving process.