## Support for Grief and Loss During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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# Thank you!

# Centering® Healthcare Institute

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# "Grief does not change you...it reveals you." -John Green



REALITIES OF GRIEF IN THE TIME OF COVID 19 We're all grieving and it's not just death

- It's our loss of normalcy, structure, routines
- Community, family, jobs, homes, schools, faith-based communities
- Normal ways of being together and supporting each other in good times and bad
- Family celebrations of milestones and intimacy
- Ability to be with our elders, children or grandchildren
- Family and community rituals for grieving
- Loss of touch

### **REALITIES OF GRIEF IN THE TIME OF COVID 19**

- Over 475,000 people have died from the coronavirus in the U.S. *so far*
- We are experiencing losses in our families and communities.
- Many of us are frontline workers. We worry about getting sick or bringing the virus home and infecting our loved ones.
- Sheltering in place with family for months creates conflict and may be dangerous. We may not feel safe at home. Domestic violence is on the rise.
- Living alone for almost a year is very isolating.
- We may not have been able to be with a loved one who is sick or dying.
- Many of us may be feeling crushed under the enormous stress of joblessness or working from home, while at the same time being responsible for our families.
- This has been going on *a long time*. The cumulative effect of the stress is causing crisis for us, our clients, communities and the nation.

### Realities for Perinatal Parents During the Pandemic

Perinatal depression, anxiety, pandemic-related stress and psychological distress are rampant amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Changing policies masks, rapid return home, leaving hospital before establishing lactation
- Pregnancy, birth and postpartum without the presence of family and community
- Remote prenatal and postpartum care
- Fear of contracting virus
- Fear, or actual loss of, a loved one from the virus
- Miscarriage and infant loss without support
- Working and caring for older children 24/7 while pregnant & postpartum
- Increase in domestic conflict, substance use disorders

Isolation is the # 1 risk factor for developing perinatal emotional complications such as, depression, anxiety, OCD and even suicidality.

### Realities for Providers during COVID Pandemic

#### Personal

- We are experiencing our own losses
- We are exhausted physically, mentally & spiritually
- We have to manage demands at work and at home
- We are isolated from our support systems, family & friends
- We have secondary trauma from exposure to COVID trauma and death
- No time for "me", self-care, to just be "off duty"

#### Professional

- Fear of contracting virus many have already contracted COVID, some have died
- Fear of bringing the virus home to family
- Constantly changing information and policies
- Wearing PPE creates separation from patients
- Being asked to work outside of our comfort zone units we are not trained for
- Transitioning from in-person care to Telehealth
- Holding and listening to patients fears & anxiety
- Patients don't have family so emotional support falls on the provider
- Isolation from our own support systems and family

We are trained to help, be there for others, offer solutions, to "fix it"

Not be the one who needs help

So how do we and our patients cope in unhealthy ways?

Technically, you're not drinking alone if your kids are home.



"How's ur week going?"

Me:



My job helps pay for the stress-eating caused by my job.

**IT'S A STRESS INTERVENTION** 

IT'S NOT ALCOHOLIS

Resiliency

The ability to bounce back from challenges. Having a solid core to draw from. Being flexible and adaptable in the face of challenges.

### What helps strengthen resiliency?

#### Social Support Social Support Social Support

Community - a sense of belonging

Feeling cared for by someone – appreciation

A place or person to our express feelings

Virtual get togethers with family & friends, social distance walks, therapy

#### Get out of the House!

Spending time in nature, fresh air, sunlight

Movement & exercise

#### **Spiritual practices and communities**

Connection to something greater than ourselves See the bigger picture – perspective beyond this experience Gratitude - no matter what Prayer, meditation, deep breathing Podcasts and music

#### Impeccable self-care

Sleep & Rest – Time off from being the "responsible one" Noise-cancelling headphones Kale, Hydrate and Vitamins <sup>(2)</sup> Reduce commitments Self- affirmations – "I am enough" "I am doing the best I can" **COPYRIGHT © 2021 GPS GROUP PEER SUPPORT LLC ALL RIGHTS RESERVED** 

### NURSE for Ourselves

- Nourishment
- Understanding
- Rest
- Spirituality
- Exercise



## In order to heal trauma, we must develop the capacity to BE rather than to DO.

Dr Kenneth Hardy

# Power of Human Attention

Human attention allows healing to begin.

Connection with others is the key to resilience.

We don't have to know the answers to be a conduit for healing.

# Reflective Listening Skill

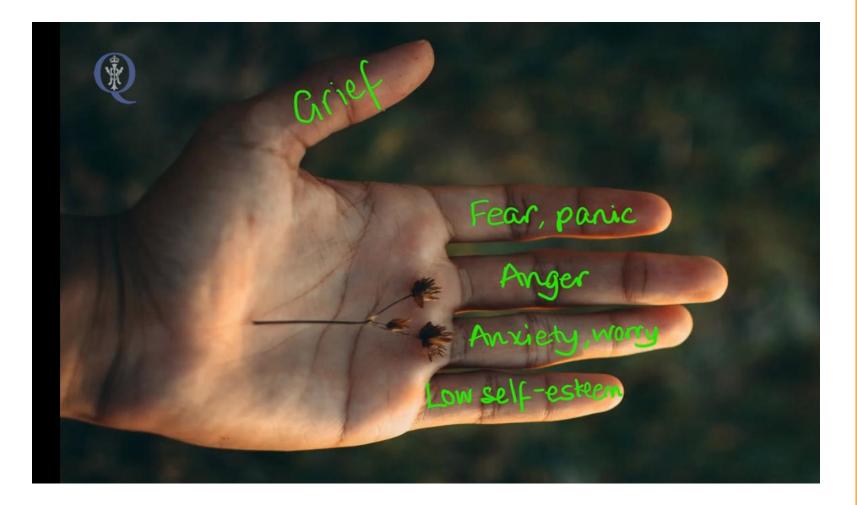
"I hear you struggling with ... "

"It's hard ....

"The strength I see in you is..."



### Finger Hold Technique



### What is true about us?

We are dedicated We love our patients We are compassionate We are resilient



### CONTACT US for upcoming trainings and other opportunities www.grouppeersupport.org

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