



COVID-19 and Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives on multiple fronts. Many people have experienced grief during the pandemic because they may have been unable to be with a loved one as they were dying or were unable to mourn someone's death in person with friends and family. Other types of loss include unemployment, loss or reduction in support services or other lifestyle changes. These losses can happen at the same time, which can complicate or prolong grief and delay a person's ability to adapt, heal, and recover.

Grief is a natural reaction in response to the death of a loved one, or to a significant life change. While grief is a shared life event, experienced by all individuals at some point in time, everyone experiences grief differently. **Not Everyone Grieves the Same.** While the grief process is highly individualized, common grief reactions may include shock and disbelief, guilt, sadness, anger, physical symptoms, disrupted sleep, and changes in appetite. There are variations based on developmental age as well. Very young children may exhibit clinginess or difficulty with separation behavioral regression, disrupted sleep, changes in eating patterns, repetitive questions, concerns about safety, physical complaints, and nightmares. Older children can have worries about safety (for self and others), difficulty concentrating, nightmares, physical complaints, hypervigilance, and social withdrawal while adolescents can have increased risk-taking behavior, difficulty concentrating, disrupted sleep, changes in eating patterns, intense emotional reactions, attempts to take on caregiving roles for younger siblings and identity confusion.

Understand your Grief

Recognize Your Loss: After a significant loss, you may be numb for a while. It is important to acknowledge the loss and the pain.

Be with The Pain: You are hurting. Admit it. Feeling the pain after a loss is a normal part of living and loving. Denying the loss does not lessen the pain, it prolongs the suffering.

Accept All of Your Feelings, Even the Ones You Don't Like. Fear, anger, guilt, sadness, depression, despair, heartbreak, and an overwhelming feeling of disorganization are characteristic reactions to a significant loss.



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It Is Okay to Feel Angry: Everyone feels angry at a significant loss. Channel it wisely and it will go away as you heal. Walk, run, and exercise. If you find yourself more irritable, journal and explore what your anger is about.

You Are Vulnerable, Be Gentle with Yourself: Invite help only from people whom you know will be gentle with your feelings.

Survivors' Guilt: Sometimes people feel survivors' guilt or that they wish they had died instead of their loved one. Get professional help. If you experience suicidal thoughts, please call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest emergency center.

Healing Does Not Occur in A Smooth Line or On A Time Table: Healing occurs in phases where you move in and out of different feelings. Remind yourself that you can get through this. You can only accept where you are in each moment and continue on your journey.

Heal at Your Own Pace: Never compare yourself to another grieving person. Each of us has our own timing.

Expect Relapses: There will always be certain things that trigger sadness again.

Keep A Journal: Putting your thoughts and feelings on paper is a good way to get them out and understand them.

Do Your Mourning Now: Allow yourself to be with your pain, it will pass sooner. Postponed grief will return later.





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Other Tools that Can Be Used for Managing Grief

You Are Not Alone, Seek Comfort as You Need It: Although you feel alone and grieving is an individual process, you are not alone.

- Invite people to call you or host conference calls with family members and friends to stay connected.
- Ask family and friends to share stories and pictures with you via mailed letters, email, phone, or video chat or via apps or social media that allow groups to share with each other (e.g., group chat, group messaging, Facebook).
- Coordinate a date and time for family and friends to honor your loved one by reciting a selected poem, spiritual reading, or prayer within their own households.
- Create memories or rituals.
- Develop a virtual memory book, blog, or webpage to remember your loved one, and ask family and friends to contribute their memories and stories.
- Take part in an activity, such as planting a tree or preparing a favorite meal that has significance to you and the loved one who died.
- Seek out grief counseling or mental health services, support groups, or hotlines, especially those that can be offered over the phone or online.
- Seek spiritual support from faith-based organizations, including your religious leaders and congregations, if applicable, or from other trusted community leaders and friends.

Understanding and Coping with other Losses

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you may feel grief due to loss of a job, inability to connect in person with others; the loss of special events and milestones (such as graduations, weddings, vacations); and the drastic changes to daily routines and ways of life that bring comfort. You may also feel a sense of guilt for grieving over losses that seem less important than the loss of life. Grief is a universal emotion; there is no right or wrong way to experience it, and all losses are significant.

- Acknowledge your losses and your feelings of grief.
- Find ways to express your grief and find comfort through art, gardening, writing, talking to friends or family, cooking, music, gardening or other creative practices.
- Consider developing new rituals in your daily routine to replace those that have been lost.
- If you are worried about future losses, try to stay in the present and focus on aspects of your life that you have control over right now.
- Explore resources available in your community.

ASK THE DOC



Latest COVID-19 News

As of 6/29, Michigan's total number of COVID-19 cases is 894,260, and the total number of deaths is 19,712. The 7-Day Average for new COVID-19 cases is less than 100, and the test positivity rate is 1.58%.

Wayne County Cases

(excluding Detroit): 101,890

Wayne County Deaths

(excluding Detroit): 2,567

Detroit City Cases: 51,449

Detroit City Deaths: 2,289

Vaccination Totals as of 6/29/21**Michigan**

First Dose: 4,841,136 (56.3%)

Two Doses: 4,463,293 (51.9%)

Wayne County

First Dose: 582,534 (60.2%)

Two Doses: 531,039 (51.2%)

City of Detroit

First Dose: 211,422 (38.0%)

Two Doses: 173,117 (31.1%)

- Michigan lifted all COVID restrictions on capacity, masks, gatherings on June 22 which was earlier than what was initially planned.
- COVID-19 vaccines were previously recommended to be administered alone, with a minimum interval of 14 days before or after administration of any other vaccines. This was out of an abundance of caution and not due to any known safety or immunogenicity concerns. On June 1st, the CDC stated that COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be administered without regard to timing. This includes simultaneous administration of COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines on the same day, as well as coadministration within 14 days. If multiple vaccines are administered at a single visit, administer each injection in a different injection site. For more details visit [the CDC website](#).
- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines created a long-lasting immunity that may protect people from COVID-19 for years, a new study found. The new results may mean that people who received the mRNA vaccines may not need boosters so long as variants do not drastically evolve, however, CDC has not released any official guideline for booster shots.

[Click Here to Find a Vaccination Site Near You](#)



Latest COVID-19 News

- The more dangerous and more transmissible Delta variant has spread to nearly every state in the US, feeding health experts' concern over potential Covid-19 spikes in the fall. The variant was first identified in India and is now considered a variant of concern by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, meaning scientists believe it can spread more easily or cause more severe disease. The Delta variant now accounts for about 1 in every 5 new coronavirus infections in the US. Experts have said that evidence points to vaccines like those from Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech providing high amounts of protection against the variant, but several states are already rethinking their COVID guidelines and some have reinstated mask mandates even for vaccinated individuals.
- More than 99% of all COVID-19 hospitalizations in Michigan between Jan. 1 and June 15 involved people who were not fully vaccinated.
- Detroit is still trying to catch up with other areas in metro Detroit. On the surface, the explanation for the lack of vaccine enthusiasm in Detroit, a 78.3% black city, might be simple: vaccine hesitancy and distrust of the healthcare system, a historic factor that has been evident in urban areas with sizable African American populations. A new door-to-door vaccination effort is targeting those who are homebound.
 - Home-bound Detroiters can contact 313-230-0505 for in-home appointments
- If Detroiters are hesitant about receiving the vaccine, they can call the City of Detroit Health Department: 313-876-4000 or check out Power Hour, Monday – Friday 12 PM - 1 PM
 - Zoom: <https://cityofdetroit.zoom.us/j/84877147801>
 - Phone: 313-626-6799
- Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) filed COVID-19 emergency rules to align with Federal OSHA's Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS). The updated rules are effective June 22nd and set to expire on Dec. 22, 2021. The rules rescind the emergency rules issued on May 24, 2021, and focus on protecting healthcare workers from occupational exposure to COVID-19 in settings where people with COVID-19 are expected to be present. During the period of the emergency standard, covered healthcare employers must develop and implement a plan to identify and control hazards in the healthcare workplace. Dialing back workplace rules for non-health care settings allows employers to use their best judgment in determining whether to maintain: daily health screenings; face-covering requirements; and social distancing requirements.



Latest COVID-19 News

- On June 23rd, MDHHS expanded mobile services to Ingham, Kent and Muskegon counties to help reach vulnerable populations and will be providing testing, vaccines and PPE along with other social services.
- On June 25th, MDHHS issued COVID-19 school guidance to help keep kids and teachers healthy. Key elements include:
 - Promoting COVID-19 vaccination for eligible staff and students.
 - Correctly and consistently using well-fitted masks that cover the nose and mouth.
 - Social Distancing: Physical distancing to reduce potential exposures.
 - Encouraging students and staff to stay home if sick or having symptoms.
 - Encouraging students and staff to get tested if having symptoms or if they are not fully vaccinated and are in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
 - Conduct screening testing.
 - Implementing contact tracing and quarantine, collaborating with the local health department.
 - Maintaining healthy environments

Mental Health Help

- Behavioral health – which includes mental health, substance use, and more – is a key part of your overall well-being. The pandemic has left many people feeling anxious or depressed. The DWHN website offers a [free and anonymous assessment](#) to help you determine if you or someone you care about should connect with a behavioral health professional.
- Another excellent digital tool to support mental health is the [myStrength app](#), with web and mobile tools designed to support your goals and wellbeing. strength's highly interactive, individually-tailored resources allow users to address depression, anxiety, stress, substance use, chronic pain and sleep challenges.
- Additionally, if you're feeling emotional distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, get free, confidential support from a Michigan Stay Well counselor. Dial 1-888-535-6136 and press "8". The Stay Well counseling line is available 24/7. www.Michigan.gov/StayWell