

COVID-19 BULLETIN

MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

WAYS TO COPE WITH COVID LOSSES

COVID-19 has brought dramatic changes to our lives, including many losses. Here are some ways to cope:

- **Name it.** In naming our feelings as grief, we can begin to understand the underlying emotions it brings and address them. Emotions are not right or wrong. However, we need to recognize that we'll experience such feelings as denial, anger, frustration and sadness, and that we need to feel the depths of our pain in order to work through our grief. Responses to loss and how people experience and express grief vary greatly by individual. It's also important to remember grief is a process, not an event or a race. With support and the willingness to do the difficult work, we can get through it.
- **Validate it.** We need to recognize all feelings and acknowledge them as important without judgement. Suppressing our feelings or feeling guilty for having them doesn't allow us to take steps to resolve them.
- **Mourn.** To assist in further understanding the difficult journey of grief, Dr. William Worden developed The Four Tasks of Mourning. Again, these are not linear, and everyone's journey is unique. While the tasks were created around mourning the death of an individual, they can also be applied to other loss. They include:
 - To accept the reality of the loss
 - Experience and process the pain of grief
 - Adjust to the world without the deceased or with the loss
 - Find a way to maintain a connection to the deceased/loss, while embarking on your own life
- **Celebrate the good.** While COVID-19 has brought great uncertainty and loss, we can also find meaning in the good it may have brought into our lives: closer ties, time for reflection, realization of what is important to us and what our priorities are. Spending time writing in a journal and acknowledging the things for which we're grateful can be a simple yet valuable exercise.
- **Routine.** At a time when life feels particularly chaotic, setting a routine is important and ensures we have a mixture of social, physical and educational activities in our day. Routine doesn't mean rigidity, but it can offer a sense of control.
- **Self-care.** Time constraints still exist. Virtual work, study, child and elder care, and even socializing can result in a hectic schedule. Ensure there's still time for self-care (however that may look). Taking a walk, exercising and meditating are all ways we can be kind to ourselves.
- **Avoid comparing.** It's easy to compare ourselves to individuals who are coping differently with the current situation. Especially when we're already feeling low, it can drain us of our limited energy and can lead to resentment towards others and towards ourselves. Instead, focus on your own strengths and coping strategies. Listing your strengths and issues you have overcome is an effective way of highlighting and celebrating your own ability to cope.
- **Lean on friends/family.** Encouraging students to socialize virtually is important. Free applications like Zoom and FaceTime provide a platform for human connection. For those that have developed "Zoom fatigue," a simple phone call may provide that needed human connection.
- **Seek support.** Now more than ever, it's important to reach out and seek the support of professionals.



