



Level Up
Elevate your total wellbeing.

OHRM Office of Human Resources Management



May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

It is a national movement aimed at raising awareness about mental health. Since 1949, [Mental Health America](#) and their affiliates across the country have led this national observance by reaching millions of people through the media, local events and screenings. Behavioral Health is one of [Level Up's](#) five dimensions. We will be highlighting the importance of mental health concerns throughout the month of May.

Grief and anxiety are real.

Right now we are living with uncertainty in our daily lives and while at work. Often we find ourselves focusing on our worst fears of what could happen and the losses that we may face. This can have an emotional impact, especially if people around you become ill. Getting the news that a loved one has tested positive or is hospitalized for COVID-19, or is seriously ill or dying from the disease, can produce a wide range of intense emotions. Practicing good self-care can help you weather this difficult time:

- **Allow yourself to grieve;** give yourself permission to feel all the emotions that this situation brings up; let yourself cry when you need to.
- **Limit your exposure to news coverage,** which can arouse emotion and increase fear. Check only once or twice per day at designated times. Turn off notifications to your phone.
- **Consider stress reduction techniques,** such as deep breathing exercises or meditation. These can help you focus on the *here and now*—letting go of worry and uncertainty for a few moments.



We react to grief and loss in different ways.

Everyone responds to loss in their own way. These are all normal reactions. Feelings may come and go and vary in intensity as we learn to live with a loss.

- **Shock, numbness, disbelief:** This is unreal, a nightmare—how could this have happened? Numbness and denial buy us time to assemble the support and strength we'll need to face the feelings and process what this loss is going to mean.
- **Sadness:** Loss can bring deep sorrow, emptiness, and despair. It hurts. Expressing this sadness, by crying, talking or some other way, can help to release some of the pain we carry.
- **Guilt and regret:** We can second-guess our actions, thinking we could have done something to prevent the death or brought more comfort in some way. There may be regrets about last interactions. We may even feel guilty for being healthy when someone we care about dies.
- **Anger and blame:** A profound loss can upend our sense of universal fairness—this isn't right. Anger may be directed at the circumstances we're in, at ourselves, or others for not preventing the death. Our deepest beliefs can come into question. Anger can be a response to helplessness and lack of control.
- **Acceptance:** Acceptance doesn't mean moving on. It means we've come to terms with the loss. We've figured out where the memory of the person and the past fits now. By integrating the loss into who we are, we're able to begin considering the future.

On-Demand Webinar: Living with Grief and Loss

Check out this on-demand webinar to support your mental and behavioral health. Watch at your convenience.

- **Webinar:** Living with Grief and Loss
- **Presenter:** Dan Ahlfield, LP, LPC, CEAP
- **Resources:** [View to webinar](#)



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