

# THE EXPERIENCE OF LOSS

## UNDERSTANDING GRIEF AND ACCESSING SUPPORT

Grief can be painful and overwhelming, and we can become concerned about ourselves and others who may be in the midst of a loss. Grief has the ability to impact every aspect of our being – how we think, feel, act, and make meaning.

The process of grief is full of ups and downs, and we may experience unanticipated moments that knock us off our feet, often at times when we thought we felt okay. This is to be expected. Listed below are some normal and natural responses to loss. Understanding the many experiences of grief can be supportive for accessing resources.

### PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

- Tightness in chest
- Stomach unsettled
- Headaches
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Restlessness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Loss of energy or feeling exhausted
- Wanting to stay in bed

### FEELINGS

- Numbness
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Guilt
- Regret
- Overwhelm
- Helplessness
- Vulnerability
- Loneliness

### THOUGHTS

- “This isn’t real.”
- “This wasn’t supposed to happen.”
- “I can’t stop thinking about the loss.”
- “It’s not fair.”

### BEHAVIORS

- Inability to concentrate
- Wandering around aimlessly
- Withdrawing from others
- Reaching out to family and friends, making sure they are okay
- Impatience with the “little stuff”

### MEANING AND PURPOSE

- Looking for meaning and to make sense of the loss
- Crisis of faith or experiencing doubt
- Questioning all aspects of life
- Feeling that the loss is “earth-shattering” or “soul-crushing”

Support, understanding and skillful guidance during grief can make a difference. That support may come from family, friends, spiritual resources, communities, and/or a counselor.

The University of Michigan and Michigan Medicine each have mental health teams of licensed counselors to provide compassionate care for those who have experienced the pain of loss. The teams are well-equipped to help you process through your ups and downs and help guide you on your journey.

- Group support through grief, loss, and other impactful events
- Individual counseling
- Consultation with leaders, managers, and supervisors on mental health topics
- Assessment and referral information for support services
- Support is offered at no cost and is confidential

### QUESTIONS

For counseling and other resources to help faculty, staff, and supervisors, contact the university’s mental health teams for confidential, short-term counseling, consultation, information, and referrals.

Campus faculty and staff, contact the Faculty and Staff Counseling and Consultation Office (FASCCO). Call (734) 936-8660 or email [fascco@umich.edu](mailto:fascco@umich.edu).

Michigan Medicine faculty and staff, contact the Office of Counseling and Workplace Resilience (OCWR). Call 734-763-5409 or email [counseling@med.umich.edu](mailto:counseling@med.umich.edu).