



# Mental and Emotional Well-Being During COVID-19

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*\*Adapted with permission of Jeffrey Ng, Psy.D.  
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## What to Expect: Individual and Collective Grief



# What to Expect: Stages of Grief

## **Denial**

- Shock; Avoidance; Disorientation; “This is not really happening!”

## **Anger, Anxiety & Fear**

- Anger about imposed disruptions/restrictions and loss of agency/control
- Anger towards decision makers (politicians, health authorities, Villanova) and perceived source(s) of pandemic (China, Asians, Asian-Americans)
- Health and safety concerns for ourselves and others
- Worry about academics, internships, job market, finances, etc.

## **Bargaining**

- Negotiating to change or circumvent the reality of the situation

## **Depression**

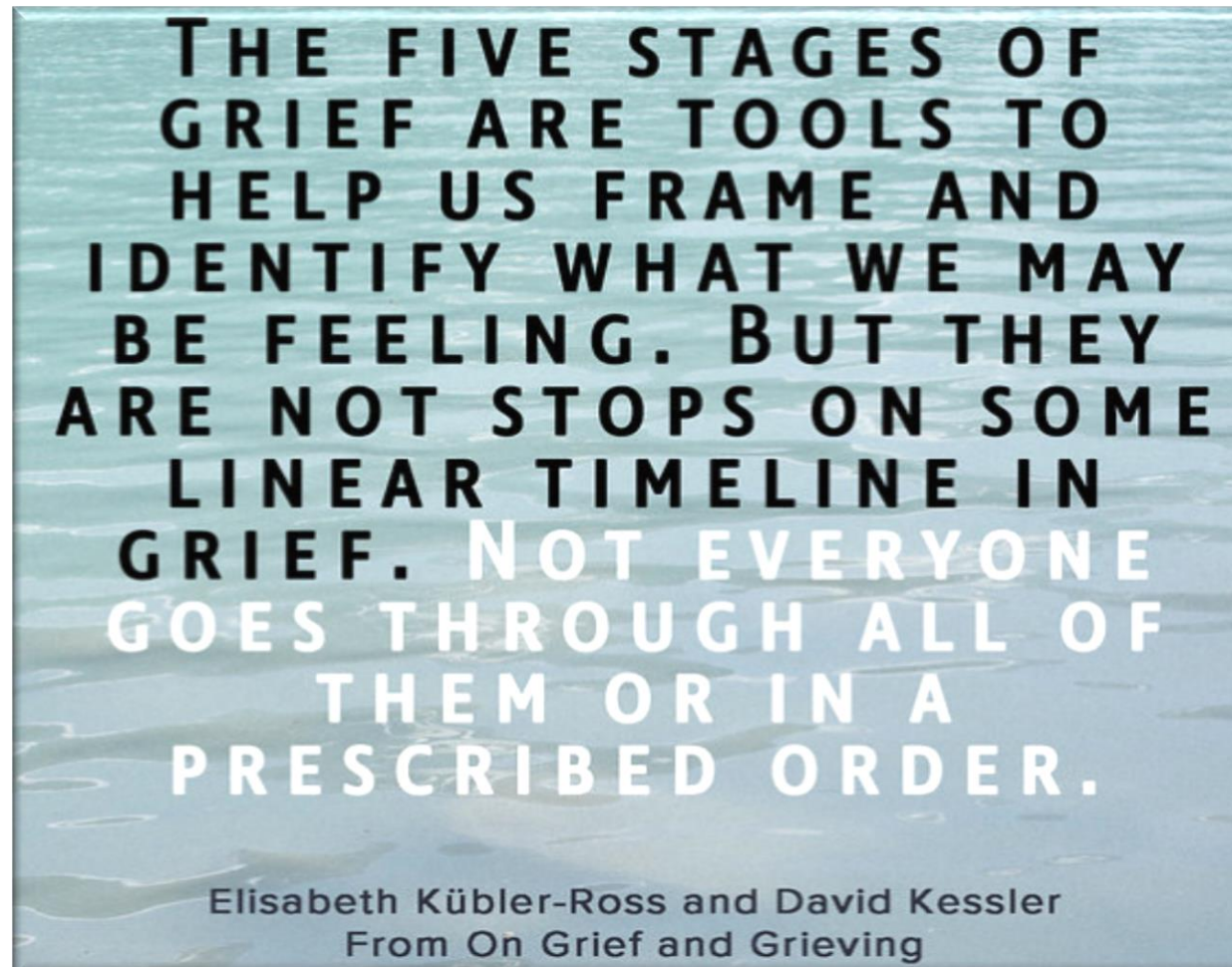
- Sadness about abrupt and unexpected losses (milestones, celebrations, future plans, relationships, sense of safety, finances etc.)
- Loneliness, boredom and helplessness

## **Acceptance**

- Reconciliation; Meaning Making; Pivoting; Planning; → Resiliency/Growth



## What to Expect: Stages of Grief



## Students Who Might Be More Vulnerable

- Students with pre-existing mental and behavioral health concerns, such as anxiety, depression and substance abuse/dependence.
- Graduating seniors who are grieving the abrupt loss and disruption of their anticipated "senior experience."
- Asian and Asian-American students who may be experiencing anti-Asian bias, stigmatization, discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping, etc.
- International students due to travel-related restrictions and potentially extended separations from family and friends.
- Students who experience being in school and campus life as protective factors.
- Students who struggle with loneliness and social isolation.
- Students who are returning to family or home environments that may compromise their mental and emotional health.
- Low-income students who may not have secure housing, food, Wi-Fi, or other essential resources for online and remote instruction.

# Strategies for Coping and Protecting Mental Health

## **Practice Self-Compassion**

- Be kinder, gentler and more patient with ourselves rather than judgmental, punitive or harsh
- Recognize and accept that imperfection and vulnerability are inevitable and part of the human experience
- Be flexible with expectations and goals
- Set reasonable boundaries for ourselves and with others

## **Limit & Monitor Social Media and News Consumption**

- Reduces risk for vicarious trauma
- Increases likelihood that our emotional and behavioral responses are proportional to actual rather than hypothetical or sensationalized situations
- Stay informed, but not be flooded or overwhelmed

## **Sustain Social and Relational Connections**

- “Social distancing” involves “physical distancing” not relational or emotional distancing

# Strategies for Coping and Protecting Mental Health

- **Maintain Reasonable Structure & Routine**
- **Attend to Basic Needs** (sleep, nutrition, exercise, etc.)
- **Gratitude**: Research demonstrates that practicing being thankful enhances resiliency, happiness and well-being; counterbalances negative news
- **Accept Vulnerability**: Acknowledge, lean into and process negative emotions rather than denying, neglecting or suppressing them; healthy distractions, however, are okay as long as we return to the feelings; embrace uncertainty and impermanence
- **Get Outside**: While maintaining physical distancing
- **Strengthen Self-Care Practices**: Exercise, yoga, reading, journaling, art, video games, movies, cooking, music, etc.
- **Internal Locus of Control**: Focus on internal rather than external locus of control



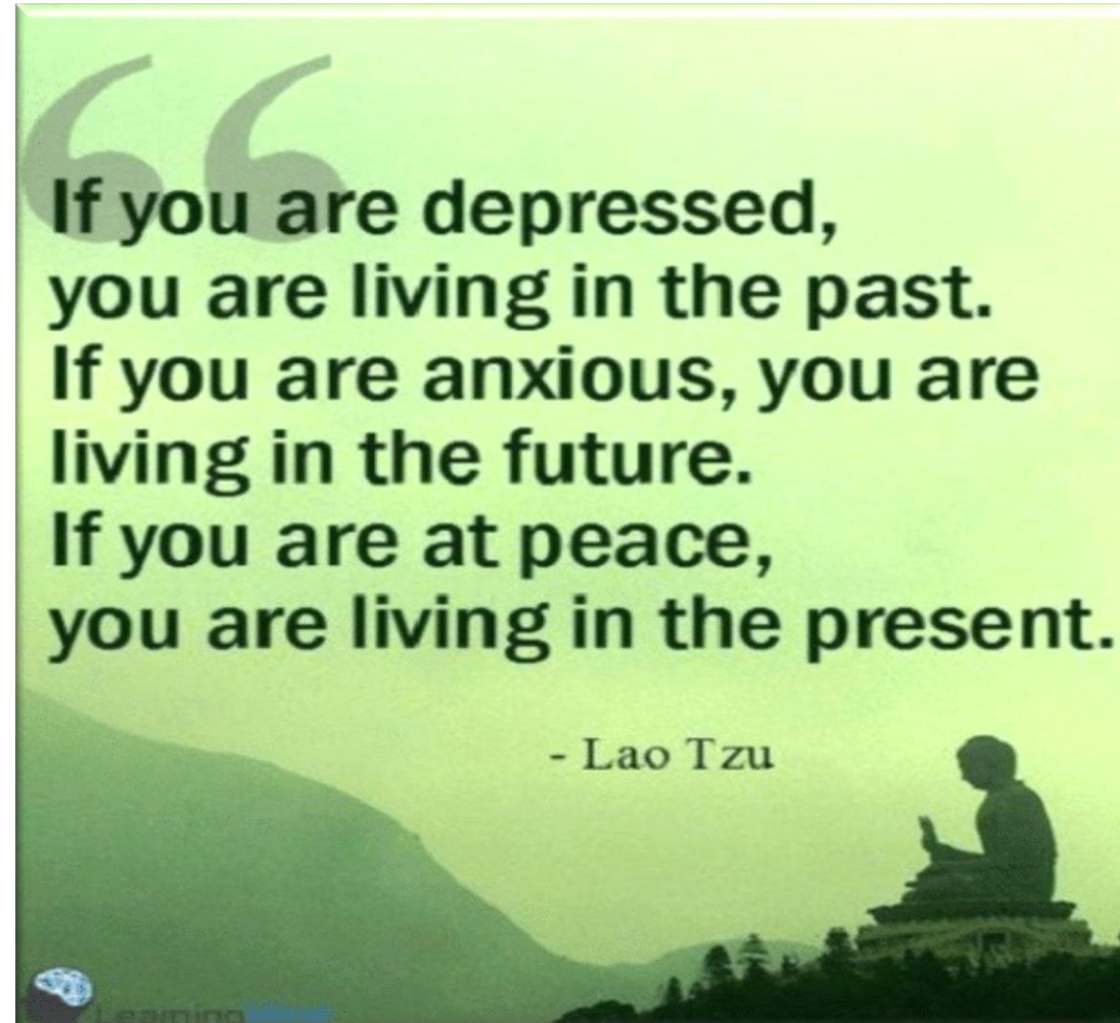




# Mindfulness Meditation

- Reduces anxiety and “fight or flight” response by deescalating autonomic nervous system arousal/activation.
- Promotes moment to moment awareness of internal experiences (feeling, thoughts, bodily sensations, etc.) while decreasing over-identification with those experiences.
- Cultivates equanimity or the mental capacity to relate to experiences non-reactively and with evenness, calmness and composure.
- Promotes living and being in the present moment.

## Mindfulness Meditation



# Recommended Mindfulness Resources

## The Best Meditation Apps of 2019

[The Mindfulness App](#) | [Headspace](#) | [Calm](#) | [buddhify](#) | [Sattva](#) |

[Stop, Breathe & Think](#) | [Insight Timer](#) | [10% Happier](#) | [Breethe](#) | [Omvana](#) |

[Simple Habit](#) | [Meditation & Relaxation Pro](#)

### **Helpful Links**

- [Top Meditation Apps for iPhone and Android](#)
- [Koru Mindfulness for College Students](#)
- [Free Guided Meditations](#)

# When to Seek Professional Help, Support and Consultation

- Persistent sadness, anxiety, anger, hopelessness, worthlessness, loss of interest in pleasurable activities, and/or feelings of being overwhelmed
- Significant impairments or changes in functioning, such as sleep, getting out of bed, appetite, concentration, and/or hygiene
- Impulsive, reckless or risky behaviors (substance abuse, self-injury, etc.)
- Thoughts or expressions about death, dying and/or suicide



# Contact Us

**Villanova Students may seek Counseling Center support by leaving a message and one of our psychologists will call you back.**



## **Our Hours**

**Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Phone: 610-519-4050**

If you are depressed and considering suicide, please call

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

**800-273 -TALK (8255)**



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