

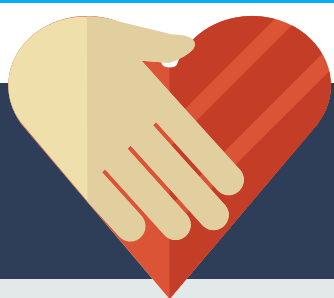
PHYSICIAN WELLNESS

COVID
LIKE TO CHAT

TOPIC #2: SUPPORTING TEAM MEMBERS GRIEVING COVID-19 RELATED LOSSES



The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced collective loss to us all; loss of face-to-face connections, loss of structure, loss of the usual way of doing business, economic loss. Whether or not you are in a formal leadership position, physicians are often looked to as leaders. How can you support others with loss and grief?



RECOGNIZE WE ARE ALL GRIEVING

1 TYPES OF GRIEF

Grief: The normal and natural reaction to any type of loss. We often think of death, but there are many other losses.

Anticipatory grief: Anticipating future loss (Will PPE protect us? What if someone we care about is infected? What if we aren't able to successfully treat a colleague?). **Anxiety can trigger anticipatory grief.**

Disenfranchised grief: Grief that is not openly acknowledged, socially acceptable, or publicly mourned. Common when the loss is not death, or for physicians who may think, 'I shouldn't feel this way, I deal with death all the time.'

Grief is normal but the way that people grieve is very individual.

CREATE A SAFE SPACE

2 ACTIONS LEADERS CAN TAKE

The most significant tool is **relational**. Continuously invest in building trusting relationships with your team.

Role model that **you** ask for help when you need it & view seeking support for grief as a sign of strength.

Naming and normalizing **grief, anticipatory grief** and **disenfranchised grief** can give others the 'permission' they may need to feel and process their loss.

Provide factual and regular communication to reduce anxiety which contributes to feelings of anticipatory loss.

The best default position you can hold is, "Everyone is grieving." Communicate supports to all.

3 WADING INTO A GRIEF CONVERSATION

First, be sure you have the **capacity (emotional, time, resource)** to hold the conversation. Do not check in with someone when you have a meeting in 5 minutes.

Resist the urge to 'fix it'. Recognize that grief cannot be 'managed' and they are the expert in their grief.

Instead, **lead with curiosity**, "Tell me more about what you're worried about."

Seek to understand what they are facing.

Recognize that you are not a grief counsellor and when a griever would benefit from an expert. Ensure they know where to access this support; AMA Physician and Family Support Program (PFSP).



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