

Dealing with loss in these troubled times

Currently, we are going through a variety of life changes and even experiencing all kinds of losses in our lives. Many have lost jobs and some may have lost a loved one. We have canceled or postponed major life events, like weddings and funerals. We are missing events, like birthday parties, tribal gatherings and Easter celebrations, even the ability for our kids to see their teachers and friends at school. Many have cancelled family vacations or trips to see tulips, or they've accepted that the concert we were looking forward to is cancelled. We miss socializing—seeing grandkids and grandparents, friends, teachers, peers and family. We miss our comforting routines.

Let's focus on the comfort knowing that this time of isolation will end because we have all pulled together to stay apart. Remember, physical distancing doesn't have to become emotional distancing. Find ways to stay connected to those you think about. Send a text, carve out some time to call or video chat, email, write letters, connect on social media-reach out virtually while you can't visit in person. We need one another more than ever right now.

Practice compassion for others as well as yourself. Even those of us fortunate enough to experience just temporary losses may still find ourselves feeling angry and depressed. We may see, in ourselves or in others, unhelpful bargaining, as in "If I wear a mask, can I go see my grandkids?" (The answer is NO!) Or we may see people denying the risk they put themselves and the community at by not staying home. This is grief. Be gentle with yourself. The other people in your life and in your house are grieving too. Be gentle with them.

If you are struggling with anxiety or depression, substance use, or your emotional or mental health at this time, please know that it's normal and it is okay to get help. When coping becomes difficult, don't hesitate to explore the services available to you at www.samhsa.gov

It has resources for your mental health and well-being, ranging from crisis to addiction to domestic violence to suicide and depression support and beyond. You can also call 360-459-5312 and schedule a phone appointment with the Nisqually Health Clinic, Including Saturdays and Sundays from 10 am—3 pm.

