

**Press Release from Child Guidance Resource Centers
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This Isn't Your Typical Grief: Part of the Pandemic We're Not Talking About Enough

There's been a lot of conversation about grieving recently, and we're glad, because we're all experiencing it. Grief is not exclusive to the loss of a loved one. Right now, there is a lot for every one of us to grieve. People have had to cancel trips, baby showers, weddings, birthday celebrations. People have lost a paycheck and financial stability, time with loved ones, freedom and flexibility. Yes, you may have a house over your head and food on the table and these are important and wonderful things. These are the things we can write down each night when we make our gratitude lists (we cannot emphasize the benefit of having one of these right now enough). These are gifts. But they don't negate the pain and anxiety of living in a world of pandemic. You have the right to grieve, especially as the unknown time for social distancing gets lengthened.

This is a great article that talks more in detail about the different kinds of grief. There are different stages and we all are going through them at different paces. The author, Scott Berinato writes, "There's denial, which we say a lot of early on: This virus won't affect us. There's anger: You're making me stay home and taking away my activities. There's bargaining: Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right? There's sadness: I don't know when this will end. And finally there's acceptance. This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed." We're all probably somewhere different between anger and acceptance right now, and that's okay. Take your time.

Grief is not a competition. Just because someone doesn't have it as bad as someone else, doesn't mean that they don't have the right to have emotions around it. We all feel pain and loss, just under different circumstances.

When we name something, we take away some of its power and allow ourselves the space to make positive change. So let's call it out: it's okay to feel sad and to be experiencing grief in this transitional, yet temporary, time. We all are. Now that we understand that this is happening for us, let's take extra good care of ourselves. Be gentle with yourself and one another. Practice compassion and empathy. This is the very first time you've gone through something like this.

You may have heard that Brenee Brown has a new podcast, Unlocking Us. It's a great listen, especially now. In the first episode, she talks about the feeling we get when we experience something for the first time. Whether the thing is good, bad, or neutral, a first time is vulnerable and can evoke overwhelming emotions. Right now, we are living in a global first time. No one knows how to live in this world. We are all quite literally doing our best in each moment, and that best is different for everyone.

It's okay to feel sad. In fact, it's a good thing! Once we can understand what we are experiencing, we can make changes to that experience. We can then understand why we feel "off" and work toward feeling better. Take baby steps. Treat yourself as you would your best friend. Reach out to your supports. We are all in this together. Perhaps most importantly, believe it will get better. It always does.

About the author: *Lauren Pescatore is a family, child, and adolescent therapist who has been with Child Guidance for seven years. During that time, she has worked in several departments expanding her experience and treatment knowledge. She is currently a Family First clinician. Lauren is a proud graduate of Chestnut Hill College and Widener University. She is a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) and preparing to obtain her clinical license (LSCW) later this year.*