

## When does Sadness or Anxiety become Clinical Depression?

**SADNESS** and **ANXIETY** are natural responses to stress and loss

**CLINICAL DEPRESSION** on the other hand is not a natural emotional state. When we're depressed we feel sad about *everything*, not just one event. Clinical Depression affects our thinking, emotions, perceptions, and behaviors.

- *Is your ability to function being affected by your feelings?*
- *Do you feel overwhelmed and hopeless?*
- *Have you had any thoughts of self-harming?*

Answering 'Yes' to any of these means it's time for you to reach out for support.

**Life Crisis Help** is just a phone call away:  
Call 1-800-273-8255. **Available 24 hours everyday.**  
See also their on-line chat line: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

**Resource: For Everyone** (*control click all underlined links*)  
[Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)

**For Communities**  
[Coping with stress during an infectious disease outbreak](#)

[Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health during an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)

**For Families and Children**  
[Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#)

[Coping After a Disaster](#) – A Ready Wrigley activity book for children 3-10



**For ALL Ochsner Employees, resources are available 24/7**

\* **Ochsner's Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** is available to all employees and members of your household. As an employee, this service is free and confidential – and you don't have to be enrolled in benefits at Ochsner to participate.

\* **C.O.P.E.** Connecting with Our Peers through Empathy (504) 894-2673; or 7-2673. Peer to peer confidential conversations.

# STRESS, GRIEF, and LOSS in the context of COVID-19

**Change = Loss = Grief**

The loss of a loved one, the end of a relationship, the loss of a pet, a life-changing diagnosis such as cancer, these are all reasons to feel grief. Today we are living through a different type of Loss.

In an article for Psychology Today\*, Sarah Epstein, MFT, identifies **Loss of Safety** as a **form of grief**.

However strong we think we are, we are all experiencing a degree of loss: **LOSS OF SAFETY and STABILITY**.

We may be experiencing a range of reactions: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance. Add to that traditional list: Fear, Overwhelm, Numbness, Guilt, and Physical and Emotional symptoms (see below).

There are so many unknowns; information changes multiple times a day. How do we best protect ourselves, our children, our partners?

### Physical Reactions

- > Trouble eating
- > Difficulty sleeping
- > Racing heart
- > Severe headache
- > Excess smoking/drinking
- > Current medical problems worsen

### Emotional Troubles

- > Nervous, helpless, fearful
- > Avoiding people, places
- > Anger outbursts
- > Blaming yourself
- > Negative view of the world
- > Distrustful, withdrawn
- > Loss of intimacy

\* <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-the-generations/201904/four-types-grief-nobody-told-you-about?eml>

## Tips for Remaining Strong

Emotions can be exhausting to the mind, body, and spirit. This is the time to especially look after yourself. Staying strong emotionally and spiritually, is important to staying strong physically. Spiritual strength can be found in gratitude, purpose, long term and short term hopes and goals, as well as religious beliefs and practices.

**Be wary of anything excessive** - exercise, watching the news, movies, shopping, work. The news is overwhelming right now.

- \* Avoid binging on food or alcohol or misusing medications.
- \* Find constructive ways to express intense feelings before they become overwhelming.

### Plan Ahead

Don't get too busy. Being super active distracts you temporarily, but you may "crash" when things calm down.

### Give yourself permission to have your feelings

You *don't* need to be strong all the time. Tears can be a good release. So can singing loud or screaming when in your car - alone! Don't want to scare your ride!

### Be with Others—even if it's Virtual Presence

Do things that help you feel connected. Play games online with friends.



### Be Kind to Yourself

It's normal to feel scared, sad, angry, or lonely. Meanwhile...

- \* Eat well. Eating too many sweets or rich foods will make you feel even more tired and lower your resistance to bugs.
- \* Drink plenty of water.
- \* Get enough rest. Naps aren't just for kids.
- \* Take a long bath.

### Leave a light on when you go to work,

**maybe the radio, too.** Simple but makes a big difference in your mood when you come home after dark, especially if you live alone.



### Get in touch with Nature

- \* Open the blinds and open the windows; work in the garden.
- \* Get 20 minutes of sunlight and/or fresh air.
- \* Be active: take a walk, bike, hike, explore a park or the lake.

**Choose healthy outlets** that will help you escape your feelings for a *brief* period. Put on headphones and listen to music, watch a movie, read a book, dance to "Alexa" in your kitchen.

### Check out Positive Resources on-line

- \* [gratefulness.org](http://gratefulness.org)
- \* [spiritualityhealth.org](http://spiritualityhealth.org)
- \* [thebuddhistcentre.com/meditateonline](http://thebuddhistcentre.com/meditateonline)
- \* [islamiconlineuniversity.com/counseling](http://islamiconlineuniversity.com/counseling)
- \* Search YOUTUBE for relaxation videos



**If technology is adding to the stress, Unplug –even for an hour!** You don't have to respond to every text, posting, or e-mail, at least not right away. Prioritize!

### Check out APPS: ex. Insight Timer, and Calm CALM has offered FREE resources

[https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath?utm\\_source=lifecycle&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=difficultimes\\_nonsubs\\_031720](https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath?utm_source=lifecycle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=difficultimes_nonsubs_031720)

### Find a new, or take up an old, hobby

### Do things that Make you Laugh

Watch funny cat videos on Youtube; watch comedy re-runs.

### Savor the Moment

Focus on the good stuff, moment by moment, breath by breath. Remember, even viruses are temporary.

### Practice Gratitude every day

Make a list of 3 things: I am grateful for ...

And do this every night before going to sleep as you review your day. It can be simple things like "my morning Starbucks" or more profound like, " I am grateful for the love of..."