

TIPS FOR COPING WITH DEPRESSION

Depression can refer to having a depressed mood for at least two weeks. A person may feel sad for a short while, but sadness alone is different from a diagnosis of depression. Below are some symptoms of depression. Which of these apply to you?

Thinking or feeling

- Feeling down, blue
- Feeling helpless or hopeless about the future
- Low concentration, energy, or motivation

Daily function

- Over or under eating
- Over or under sleeping
- Difficulty getting out of bed

Social challenges

- Loss of interest in previously fun activities
- Socially isolating from friends or family
- Avoiding leaving your room or home

COPING TIPS FOR FEELING DEPRESSED

Tell your doctor about your depressed feelings

- Asking for help is key to managing depressed feelings.

Practice positive self-talk

- Repeat sentences like these to yourself:
 - "I choose to focus on what I can control"
 - "I can and I will do things to promote healing in my life"
 - "I can handle this one step at a time"
 - "I choose hope"

Now you make up your own positive, reassurance sentence you can tell yourself when you feel depressed.

Distract yourself from depressed thoughts or feelings by taking action

- Specifically, when you catch yourself feeling depressed, tell yourself this: "Now I am going to do some productive activity so I have something else to focus on."



HELPFUL ACTIVITIES



Exercise

Even exercising for five minutes per day is better than zero minutes per day. Consider these: fast walking; jogging; taking a bike ride; doing jumping jacks; lifting weights; shooting hoops; kicking a soccer ball around; doing push-ups; dancing in your room; or others.

Which of these would you be willing to agree to try once in the next week?

Get organized

Organizing schoolwork, a garage, a bedroom closet, the kitchen, etc. can distract you from negative thoughts and feelings, give you something concrete and productive to focus on, and make you feel more in control and organized overall.

If you had to organize something this week, what is something that could use organizing in your life?



Make a gratitude list

Feeling depressed is hard, in part, because the feelings make you focus on the negative and forget about the positive. Trying to re-focus on the positive can improve your mood. Write down five things you are grateful for in your life. They could be little things or big things.

If you had to choose the one thing you are most grateful for, what would that be?



Get proper sleep

Sleep is one of the most important ways we keep our mood regulated. Try to set your bedtime and wake up time for the same times each day. Turn off your phone one hour before bedtime because screens otherwise keep your brain awakened. Practice calming sleep rituals a half hour before you want to fall asleep, including reading, meditating, listening to calming music, etc.

Which sleep hygiene practices can you start implementing this week?

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT DEPRESSION?

You can schedule an appointment with one of our clinicians by calling **(909) 274-4400**, or visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at **[bit.ly/mtsac-mental health](https://bit.ly/mtsac-mental-health)**

For additional information, go to the National Institute of Mental Health website at

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/>

TIPS FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY

Mt. San Antonio College
Student Health Services

Anxiety refers to having excessive worry for more than six months about a variety of activities. Anxiety can present in a number of different ways. Below are some symptoms of anxiety. Which of these might apply to you?

Energy level

- Disrupted sleep
- Feeling easily fatigued

Thinking and feeling

- Poor concentration or mind going blank
- Irritability

Body

- Muscle tension
- Restlessness, keyed up, or edgy



COPING TIPS

Talk to your doctor or licensed mental health professional about your symptoms

The structure of routine appointments is an important first step in reducing anxiety.

Maintain physical and mental health

Our physical and mental health are closely connected with one another. Exercising regularly, having a balanced diet, and getting enough sleep can all help to manage symptoms of anxiety. Ask yourself: How often do you exercise in a week? Do you notice what happens to your mind and body after consuming certain foods and drinks, especially alcohol and caffeine?



Take breaks

Giving yourself regular breaks from problems or stressful situations can help keep anxiety at bay. Depending on what's available, you might do bigger things like taking a yoga class or getting a massage, or smaller things like listening to music you enjoy or doing a guided relaxation exercise.

HELPFUL ACTIVITIES

Keeping a journal

Writing down your thoughts can help you reduce anxiety. Having a regular practice of writing in a journal for 10-15 minutes can help consolidate your thoughts from the day and make the next day feel more manageable.

Can you think of at least three different days that you can set aside 10-15 minutes to write in your journal?

Progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness

Progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness can help with relaxing your body and learning to accept reality as it is. Progressive muscle relaxation is a process in which you gradually relax all the muscles in your body. Relaxing the body can help relax the mind. Mindfulness, in a nutshell, is the practice of observing what's happening without judgment. Adding both coping skills to your toolbelt is an important step in reducing anxiety.

What time of day could you set aside 5-10 minutes to put these things into practice? Can you do them on your own or would like a prompt to guide you through these exercises?

Breathing exercises

Breathing is connected to your nervous system. Breathing exercises help you regulate your nervous system, and in turn, help with managing anxiety. **4-7-8 breathing** (inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds) is a technique that you can use to help bring your nervous system back into balance.

Can you commit to doing this one to two times per day for the next week?

Aromatherapy

Our sense of smell can be a powerful tool in helping us relax and get into a calm state of mind. Enjoy aromatherapy of oils, incense, or candles. Scents like lavender, chamomile, or sandalwood elicit a soothing effect.

Can you think of a time when a certain smell made you feel relaxed?

What kind of scent might you want to use during your nighttime ritual to help you unwind?



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ANXIETY?

You can schedule an appointment with one of our clinicians by calling **(909) 274-4400**, or visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at bit.ly/mtsac-mentalhealth

For additional information, go to the Anxiety & Depression Association of America at <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad>

TIPS FOR COPING WITH STRESS

Stress has several different definitions. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to stress as physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. Stress is not always negative and may show up in different ways in our lives. Do any of these apply to you?

Chronic Stress - This refers to daily stress such as caring for family, doing well at work or school, and paying bills. Left unchecked, this may impact your health.

Distress - This refers to common experiences that may have a negative connotation such as having financial problems, getting injured, or receiving some type of punishment.

Eustress - This refers to life changes or transitions that could be seen as beneficial. Some examples are: getting promoted at work or graduating from school.

COPING TIPS

Identify the root

Stress can come from several different sources. Identifying which specific aspects of your life may be contributing to stress is an important part in taking steps to manage stress more effectively.

Clarify your values

What we deem important in life can influence how we perceive and go about addressing potential problems. We may be firm in some values, but need to be more flexible in others.

- ***Do you know what your most important values are?***
- ***What values do you hold that could stand to be more flexible?***

Manage expectations

One way to combat stress is changing how you think about it. Two of the biggest culprits of stress may be rumination and having unrealistic expectations. Acknowledging your limitations is not a sign of weakness. We all have different limits depending on the resources available to us; sometimes working within those limits is the best we can ask of ourselves.

- ***Do you tend to keep fixating on a stressor after you have done everything you can? If so, what else might be able to capture your attention away from the stressor?***



HELPFUL ACTIVITIES

Tech Breaks

We use technology for so many different things in our lives today. If your source of stress involves interacting with technology, you may have built an association between technology and stress. Even without the association, having too much screen time can cause eye strain and headaches, so having some planned breaks can bring stress levels down.

- *Are there small blocks of time during the day that you could make tech-free?*
- *What are three or four activities that you might do during that time instead of using an electronic device?*

Socialize

Even the most introverted of us require some degree of meaningful social interaction. Sharing what is important to you with someone you care about is a good way to help combat stress.

- *Who are three to four people that you think you may be able to contact. Imagine you are talking to one of those people...what are three challenges and three successes that you would want to share with them?*

Do something creative

Having a creative outlet is a great way to let your mind get a break from all the things that are stressing you out. You may already have creative hobbies or you could take this time to develop a new skill. Remember, the purpose is to reduce stress, not to perfect this skill.

- *Some examples of creative outlets include drawing, singing, dancing, writing, and gardening. Do any of these appeal to you?*

Tend to physical self-care

We hear a lot about getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet, and getting enough movement. These are basic considerations, but they are still important for keeping stress in check. Try focusing on sleep, eating, or movement for a week and observe how you feel afterward.

- *Which of the three physical self-care areas that were mentioned tend to be the hardest for you? Let's make a plan to improve that area this week and then we can look at the others.*



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT STRESS?

You can schedule an appointment with one of our clinicians by calling **(909) 274-4400**, or visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at **bit.ly/mtsac-mentalhealth**

For additional information, visit the American Institute of Stress, **<http://www.stress.org/daily-life>**

TIPS FOR COPING WITH RELATIONSHIP DISTRESS

Relationship distress usually arises from having significant conflict or discord with others. This distress can range from milder versions (frequent arguments, disconnection for long periods of time) to more extreme versions (abuse or neglect).

Which relationships would you say are currently under the most distress right now?



FRIENDS

Distress in friendships can sometimes show up as bullying, inconsistency in connecting, jealousy, or difficulty overcoming differences.



ROMANTIC

Relationship difficulties may include infidelity, communication issues, issues with intimacy, or disagreeing on future goals or the course of the relationship.



FAMILY

Family distress may include balancing home, work, and school demands, unequal division of chores, distance from family, or constant arguments.

COPING TIPS

Assertive communication: Assertive communication refers to being able to express your needs in a way that is clear, without making someone else feel badly for having thoughts, feelings, or opinions that are different than yours. Practicing assertive communication increases the likelihood that the person you are speaking with will be able to hear and understand what you are expressing. It also helps to decrease the chance of defensiveness interfering with communication.

Assertiveness takes time to practice, and often times we tend to be either passive or aggressive when we communicate with others, which can hurt our relationships. Can you provide examples of when you saw passive or aggressive communication hurt a relationship? How might the person have communicated more assertively?

Compromise: In reality, no one is right all the time, and we cannot always have everything the way we want it. Knowing when to be assertive and stick to your position, but also when to compromise for the sake of a relationship, is a useful skill to cultivate. Compromise does not mean that you have to keep score of who gave in and when, but rather that you recognize that other people bring things to the table, and sometimes it's okay to honor that.

- *What does it take for you to compromise with someone else?*
- *Do you tend to want to collaborate or to prove your point?*
- *Are you more focused on the facts of a situation or how your values tie into the disagreement?*

HELPFUL ACTIVITIES

Staying Present

One helpful way to build a positive connection with someone is to give them your undivided attention as much as possible. This can be difficult to do because our brains move really fast when processing information. However, staying focused on the person you are talking with can not only help to communicate interest, but also help make sure you are receiving the information accurately.

- *Are you aware of your body language when you interact with someone? Where does your mind go when someone is speaking to you about a difficult subject?*
- *What needs to change about these things so you can be more present with the people you care about?*

Four Antidotes

The four antidotes are used to combat the four horsemen that may show up during conflict: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, stonewalling.

1. Criticism refers to attacking someone's personality or character. The antidote to criticism is using "I" statements to express your needs rather than attacking the other person.
 2. Contempt is attacking someone's sense of self with the intent to psychologically abuse them. The antidote to contempt is practicing gratitude and recognizing when someone has taken positive actions.
 3. Defensiveness is an attempt to make yourself a victim to escape blame. The antidote for defensiveness is owning your mistakes and being willing to apologize for any wrongdoings.
 4. Stonewalling is an extreme form of withdrawal that creates emotional distance and communicates disapproval. The antidote for stonewalling is engaging in activities that are self-soothing, such as taking a break, engaging in deep breathing, and tensing and relaxing muscles.
- *Can you think of times when the four horsemen were present in your relationship? How about times you used the four antidotes?*
 - *What is your plan for using the four antidotes in the future? How will you introduce the four horsemen when you notice they are showing up in conflict?*

Ingredients of Interaction

The ingredients of an interaction refer to all the different layers that take place when you are communicating with someone. By slowing things down, you can start to better understand where breakdowns in communication occur. Over time, you will be able to better understand where things tend to fall apart and intervene earlier. The areas of attention are:

- **Intake** - what information you took in with your five senses
- **Meaning** - how you interpreted the information from intake
- **Significance** - how you feel about the interpretation and how you feel about your feelings
- **Response** - what you say back to the person and how you say it

Think of previous interactions and how you handled them with this formula:

- *Which ingredient is most involved in communication breakdowns for you?*
- *How can you address this in the future?*

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT RELATIONSHIP DISTRESS?

You can schedule an appointment with one of our clinicians to get more information about the specific kind of relationship distress you are experiencing by calling **(909) 274-4400**.

Visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at bit.ly/mtsac-mentalhealth

TIPS FOR COPING WITH TRAUMA

Post-traumatic stress is a collection of symptoms that are experienced in response to an actual or threatened traumatic event. These traumatic events may be experienced directly or indirectly. Below are some symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Do any of these apply to you?

Intrusive symptoms

- Recurrent or involuntary memories
- Recurrent distressing dreams
- Flashbacks

Thinking and feeling

- Exaggerated negative beliefs about self
- Detachment
- Persistent anger, guilt, shame, or horror

Reactivity or arousal

- Engaging in reckless behaviors
- Hypervigilance
- Angry outbursts with little to no provocation



COPING TIPS

Access your support network, such as your doctor or licensed mental health professional, about your symptoms

The structure of routine appointments is an important first step in reducing anxiety. After a traumatic event, trust can be difficult, so be intentional about who is part of your circle.

- *Can you think of three to four people who would be good supports?*
- *What qualities of these particular people make them a good fit for your needs?*

Resume familiar routines

Re-establishing familiar routines is one of many ways we can start to restore a sense of safety after dealing with a traumatic event. However, be mindful that everyone does this at their own pace, so check-in with yourself as you do this.

- *What parts of your routine feel safe to start re-introducing into your schedule right now? Can anyone from your support network help you with this?*

Take time for yourself

This may seem to contradict the suggestion to access your network, but in reality, we need both in balance to effectively manage symptoms of trauma. Alone time might involve having some peace and quiet to read a book, meditate, or write in your journal, or it may involve listening to music or watching a show that you really enjoy.

- *Is alone time exciting or scary for you? Are there any other activities aside from the ones mentioned that you might want to do in your alone time?*

HELPFUL ACTIVITIES

Window of tolerance

Everyone has a different mental window of tolerance. When you are in the window, you generally feel safe and are in a balanced mental state. After trauma, the window of tolerance might be narrower, but it can grow over time.

- *Think of two or three activities that you have engaged in within the past week that are within your window, slightly outside your window, and very much outside your window. What supports might you need to try some of those activities that are slightly outside your window?*

Focusing on your five senses

Focusing on your five senses is a great way to get you in the present moment and in touch with your body. For this exercise, you will be identifying five things you can see, 4 you can hear, 3 sensations you can feel, 2 things you can smell, and 1 can you taste (you can have a small food item or beverage for this one).

- *Practicing a skill like this makes it easier to do when you need it at a moment's notice. What are two or three settings where you might be able to put this into practice?*

12 Seconds of positivity

Research in neuropsychology suggests that intentionally thinking positively about something and focusing on it for 12 seconds is enough to disrupt stress-based thinking and prompt coping. Pick a positive image (a friendly person, an animal you like, or a scene in nature) and try to focus exclusively on this image for 12 seconds. Your mind may start to wander, but that is normal. Just gently redirect your attention back to your image.

- *Describe the image you came up with? What made this exercise easy or difficult to do?*

Laughter

According to research, laughter is a great way to reduce stress and re-wire your brain. It may be difficult to want to laugh after having experienced a traumatic event, so explore how much you want to dive into this type of activity.

- *What comes to mind for you when you think of intentionally seeking a humorous outlet? Can you describe some shows or people that are almost always guaranteed to make you laugh?*



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS?

You can schedule an appointment with one of our clinicians by calling **(909) 274-4400**, or visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at bit.ly/mtsac-mentalhealth

For additional information, visit www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder

TIPS FOR SELF-CARE

MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS

Social distance doesn't have to mean social isolation. It's essential to have a strong support system that you can turn to when you're struggling. Setting up virtual get-togethers, phone calls, or group texts with friends or family members can significantly improve your mental health and help you feel less alone.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Maintaining your physical health is a crucial factor in keeping your mind healthy, too. Eating a well-balanced and nutritious diet can boost your immune system, lowering the effects of stress on the body. Incorporating exercise with a healthy diet will also help improve your mood by producing endorphins.

TAKE A BREAK FROM NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

It's important to know when to unplug before it starts affecting your mental health. You can stay informed by checking in from time to time, but don't overdo it by continuously refreshing social media throughout the day. This can increase feelings of fear and anxiety.

MAKE YOURSELF A PRIORITY

Treat yourself by doing things you might not have had the time to do before the pandemic.

GO OUTDOORS

Not getting enough sunlight can result in a drop in serotonin levels, which directly affects your mood. Low levels of serotonin can also lead to symptoms of depression. Going outdoors for at least one hour every day will allow you to get fresh air and improve your mental well-being.

STICK WITH A DAILY MEDITATION PRACTICE

The physical benefits of meditation include decreased blood pressure, reduced stress and anxiety, regulated negative thinking, and a healthier immune system. Meditation also helps you practice mindfulness and develop relaxation techniques. Try some of the various free apps, podcasts, and YouTube videos to help you get started.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO CRY

At some point, you may feel sad, disheartened, or even hopeless. At a time of heightened stress and anxiety, it's common to develop burnout or to experience an emotional breakdown. Give yourself permission to feel these emotions fully to release any pain, and help see the sun through the clouds once again.

TAKE DEEP BREATHS

Although it doesn't seem like it would be very beneficial, deep breathing techniques are proven to reduce anxiety and relieve stress. Taking deep breaths allows you to stay present in the moment and provides peace of mind.





PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Getting enough sleep is a significant part of maintaining physical and mental health. Not only does sleep help boost the immune system, it also helps lower the effects of stress on the body. Experts suggest that young adults get at least seven hours of sleep each night to recharge their bodies and brain. Sleep deprivation can cause irritability, inability to focus, overreactions, increased stress, and makes you more prone to illnesses.

AVOID SELF-MEDICATING

College students struggling with mental illness are at a higher risk of developing drug or alcohol problems. To cope with symptoms, some young adults turn to drugs or alcohol to self-medicate. However, abusing substances can worsen and exacerbate mental health symptoms. Don't be afraid to ask for help from a mental health professional to find healthy coping strategies and a treatment plan that works best for you.



CREATE A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

College is a time when many young adults need guidance and support. Creating supportive relationships has many benefits, not only physically but mentally. A strong support system will help when you're feeling down or stressed, provide guidance when you fail, and celebrate when you succeed.

LISTEN TO MUSIC

One of the most convenient ways to relieve stress is to listen to music. Music has many therapeutic benefits: it helps lower anxiety and depression levels, ease muscle tension, and enhance your mood. Make a playlist with your favorite songs that help you de-stress, and start your morning by playing them.

FIND A HOBBY

Instead of using all of your free time to binge watch a Netflix show, try to find a hobby. Hobbies promote better mental and physical health by lowering the risk of depression, dementia, and high blood pressure. They also provide a mental break from everyday stressors and improve efficiency. Whether it's journaling, drawing, playing an instrument, or something else you're passionate about, make time to add it into your daily routine.

SET GOALS

Setting goals helps define priorities and improves self-confidence and motivation. Make sure to write down the goals you want to set and how you want to accomplish them. Not only will this help you stay organized, but it will also allow you to keep track of your progress towards achieving the goal.



COUNSELING

Mt. SAC provides free personal counseling. Licensed mental health counselors offer supportive, nonjudgmental, confidential, short-term counseling. You can schedule an appointment with one of our clinicians by calling Student Health Services at **(909) 274-4400**, or visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at bit.ly/mtsac-mentalhealth

COPING WITH RECEIVING AN UNEXPECTED AND DIFFICULT DIAGNOSIS

Receiving an unexpected, difficult, and potentially life-threatening diagnosis can turn your life upside down, making you feel you are on an emotional rollercoaster. You may feel dismayed, anxious, resentful, sad, ashamed, and lonely as you begin treatment.

Being diagnosed with a life-threatening or even terminal disease is also likely to trigger a range of other feelings, including fear and grief. You are then faced with evaluating treatment options and left considering how this will affect your family, finances, and future. How you choose to move forward impacts your long-term mental health, relationships with friends and family, and your overall recovery.

COPING TIPS

GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO ADAPT

Anxiety, denial, anger, and fear are all normal reactions to receiving bad news. Allow yourself the space and opportunity to process and work through the emotions. How long this takes varies for everyone. It may be a few days, a few weeks, or longer, but you should eventually reach some level of acceptance regarding the diagnosis.

EDUCATE YOURSELF AND LEARN ABOUT YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS

Researching trustworthy sources and understanding as much as you can about your diagnosis and treatment options allow you to get the most from members of your treatment team and better advocate for yourself.

Consider asking your treatment team about strategies to help balance the demands of treatment with attending school, working, and caring for others.





ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR EMOTIONS, EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS, AND SEEK HELP

While it is normal to feel "down" or "blue" at times, signs of depression are more serious and debilitating. Symptoms of depression can include no longer appreciating enjoyable activities, sleep disturbance, feelings of hopelessness, and even suicidal thoughts or feelings. How long negative thoughts and feelings last is important, as depression can be diagnosed if these feelings last two weeks or longer. It is a good idea to seek help from mental health professionals, such as psychologists, psychotherapists, counselors, and psychiatrists, to help you manage your thoughts and feelings, and to help you come to terms with a difficult diagnosis.



ESTABLISH A SUPPORT SYSTEM

It is not uncommon for many people to withhold the news of the diagnosis and isolate themselves. Reach out to family and friends when you learn of the diagnosis so they will be in a better position to help you cope with your emotional reactions to the diagnosis.

REMAIN ACTIVE IN LOOKING FOR THINGS THAT BRING YOU JOY

Escaping your living space and doing something productive or positive can help you focus on other things besides your diagnosis and the anxiety it brings. Exercise can also help. Maintain practices that you have found to provide emotional relief. Remind yourself of people and events in which you find meaning and comfort.



FIND WAYS TO HELP YOURSELF RELAX

Practices, such as journaling, meditation, guided imagery, yoga, breathing exercises and relaxation techniques, can help you relax and better cope when you feel worried.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

<https://www.apa.org/topics/chronic-illness/coping-diagnosis>

GRIEF AND LOSS

After a death, survivors are left to face the pain of grief and a new world without their loved one. However, grief does not wait for death to happen; it occurs both in anticipation of and following a loss. Mourning is the process of adapting to loss.



Keep in mind that adapting does not mean forgetting—it means finding a way to cherish the memories of a loved one while continuing to move forward in life. It means adjusting to a world without the deceased while holding a place for them in your heart.

THE GRIEF PROCESS - THE KÜBLER-ROSS MODEL

The feelings and symptoms of grief can take on many different forms and are unique for each of us. There is no right or wrong way to feel, and there is no specific rule that says you are to finish grieving after a certain time. The important thing is that you take the time you need to go through the various stages of grief and be able to acknowledge your feelings along the way.

There are generally five stages of grief that we go through when we have a loss. We don't have to experience the stages in any particular order, and there is no time limit as to how long a person may pass through each stage. Each stage represents a common emotional response to significant loss. The five stages are:

DENIAL

A person in this stage is in shock and disbelief about the loss. They are unable to acknowledge the loss, and may try to ignore it or pretend that nothing has happened. This stage can help protect the person from the immediate intensity of the loss.

BARGAINING

In this stage, a person may focus on ways they could have prevented the loss or on what they might have done differently. Sometimes a person will try to make a deal with someone or something in the belief that those actions can be undone. Feelings of guilt are common in this stage.

ANGER

At this point, a person begins to realize the lack of control and power they had in preventing the loss. A person within this stage may lash out at friends, family, and their faith system; sometimes the person will feel anger about being abandoned or left alone. There may be attempts to blame others for not preventing the loss.

DEPRESSION

The impact of the loss is wholly felt in this stage, as well as the significance of the loss. People may have crying spells, lack of motivation, difficulty eating or sleeping, poor concentration, and lack of energy.

ACCEPTANCE

In this stage, people come to an understanding of what the loss means to them and begin to move forward. They have integrated the loss with their life experiences. They have largely resolved their very painful feelings about the loss.



COPING TIPS

IDENTIFY YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

While you may sometimes feel alone as you are grieving, you are not alone. There are other people in your life that you can lean on for support. They may be family, friends, support groups, people in your faith community, or mental health professionals.

EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

Do not be afraid to tell people how you feel or to express those feelings. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to feel. If it is difficult to verbalize how you feel, use other methods like journaling or drawing to express yourself. It is important to acknowledge your feelings in order to help you better cope with the loss.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

In dealing with a stressful situation such as a loss, it is easy to forget about taking care of yourself. It is important to remember to eat and sleep adequately. It is okay to give yourself a break from the grief. Sometimes, you need a diversion from the stress to allow yourself the opportunity to recharge mentally. Keeping yourself healthy makes it easier to deal with the loss. Avoid drinking alcohol or using drugs, as they will inhibit or prevent you from moving forward with your grief.

DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

Everybody has their own way of coping. For some people, going to the wake or funeral of the loved one, when the loss is death, is important to them since it gives them a feeling of closure. For others, going to those events is too difficult, and they find other ways for closure, such as creating a memorial or engaging in an act to honor the lost person, such as planting flowers or donating to a favorite charity in their name. Whichever method helps you deal with the loss in a healthy and productive way is acceptable.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

When we lose someone close to us, there will come times, like anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, and other special events, that will invoke intense feelings and emotions. This is normal and should be expected. Planning ahead on how to handle those times can make the special days less difficult.

Coping with loss is difficult as we struggle with our feelings while trying to say "goodbye." Going through the grieving process is not something that must be done alone. If you find yourself having difficulty coping with the loss, reach out for help from a mental health professional.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Grief: Coping With the Loss of Your Loved One

<https://www.apa.org/topics/families/grief>

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death & Dying* (Simon & Schuster/Touchstone), 1969

RECOVERING EMOTIONALLY FROM THE TRAUMA OF A LIFE-THREATENING EVENT

Emotional trauma is the result of especially stressful events that can crush your sense of security, making you feel vulnerable in a dangerous world. Emotional trauma can leave you struggling with persistent distressing emotions and memories that linger. It can also leave you feeling disconnected, numb, and distrustful of other people.

Traumatic experiences, such as a natural disaster or mass violence, often involve a threat to life or safety, but any situation that leaves you feeling isolated and overwhelmed can result in trauma, even if it is just a perceived threat and does not involve physical harm.

COMMON RESPONSES TO LIFE-THREATENING EVENTS

Stress-related physical symptoms. Headaches, nausea, and chest pain may occur and could require medical attention. Pre-existing medical conditions could be affected by disaster-related stress.

Sensitivity to environmental factors. Sirens, loud noises, burning smells, darkness, or particular places may stimulate memories of the trauma and create heightened anxiety. These “triggers” may be accompanied by fears that the stressful event will be repeated.

Strained interpersonal relationships. Increased conflict, such as more frequent disagreements with family members and co-workers, can occur. You might also become withdrawn, isolated, or disengaged from your usual social activities.

Intense or unpredictable feelings. You may be anxious, nervous, overwhelmed, or grief-stricken. You may also feel more irritable or moody than usual.

Changes to thoughts and behavior patterns. You might have vivid, recurring memories of the event. These memories may occur for no apparent reason and may lead to physical reactions, such as rapid heartbeat or sweating. It may be difficult to concentrate or make decisions. Sleep and eating patterns can also be disrupted—some people may overeat and oversleep, while others experience a loss of sleep and loss of appetite.



RECOVERING FROM EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

Research shows that most people are resilient and, over time, are able to overcome the emotional trauma stemming from a life-threatening event.

People typically experience stress in the immediate aftermath, but within a few months, most people are able to resume functioning as they did prior to the life-threatening event. It is important to remember that resilience and recovery are the typical pattern, not prolonged distress.

COPING TIPS

GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO ADJUST

Anticipate that this will be a difficult time in your life. Allow yourself to mourn any losses you have experienced and be patient with changes in your emotional state.

FOCUS ON SELF-CARE

While it may seem counterintuitive to think about taking care of yourself first, you cannot be of service to others if you are unstable. Monitor all of your physical health needs - being sure to eat, sleep, exercise, and if possible, maintain a normal daily routine.

OBSERVE YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Remember that a wide range of feelings during these difficult times are common. Know that others are also experiencing emotional reactions and may need your time and patience to put their feelings and thoughts in order.

ACCEPT WHEN YOU, OR THOSE AROUND YOU, MAY NEED EXTRA SUPPORT

It is not uncommon for individuals of all ages to experience stress reactions when exposed to life-threatening events. Changes in eating and sleeping habits, energy level, and mood are important signs of distress. Watch for intense emotional reactions, such as anxiety or a strong need for revenge. If someone else is struggling, point them to licensed professional counselors who can provide needed support.

AVOID EXCESS MEDIA CONSUMPTION

While it is important to stay informed, media portrayals of life-threatening events, such as mass violence, have been shown to cause acute stress and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Limit your exposure, and take a break from news sources.

MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

These individuals can provide you with emotional support to help deal with difficult times.

COUNSELING

Mt. SAC provides free personal counseling. Licensed mental health counselors offer supportive, nonjudgmental, confidential short-term counseling sessions. You can schedule an appointment with one of our clinicians by calling Student Health Services at **(909) 274-4400** or visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at bit.ly/mtsac-mentalhealth

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/disasters-response/recovering>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips>



THE FACTS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS



Percent of the U.S. population, or 28.8 million Americans, that will have an eating disorder in their lifetime

25% of college women binge and purge to manage their weight

10,200 deaths per year as a direct result of an eating disorder, equating to 1 death every 52 minutes



EATING DISORDERS AFFECT EVERYONE:



- All ages, starting as young as 5 years old to over 80 years old
- All races, however, people of color with eating disorders are **half as likely to be diagnosed or to receive treatment**
- All genders, with females being **2x more likely to have an eating disorder**
- All sexual orientations

WHAT IS AN EATING DISORDER?

An eating disorder is a condition characterized by an abnormal relationship with food. Several different types of eating disorders exist, including binge eating disorder, anorexia nervosa, and bulimia nervosa. Each of these disorders presents with different signs and symptoms. In general, anorexia nervosa occurs when someone severely restricts his or her intake of food. Bulimia nervosa involves a cycle of bingeing and purging, and binge eating disorder appears with periods of bingeing only. All eating disorders can lead to serious health complications if left untreated. For this reason, it is important to be able to identify the signs of an eating disorder in yourself and your loved ones.

POTENTIAL SIGNS OF AN EATING DISORDER



THE FACTS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS

There are different types of eating disorders. If you are worried for a friend or for yourself, you may benefit from knowing the following:

ANOREXIA NERVOSA

Often simply called anorexia – it is a potentially life-threatening eating disorder characterized by an abnormally low body weight, intense fear of gaining weight, and a distorted perception of weight or shape. People with anorexia use extreme efforts to control their weight and shape, which can significantly interfere with their health and life activities.

BULIMIA NERVOSA

Commonly called bulimia – it is a serious, potentially life-threatening eating disorder. Those with bulimia have episodes of bingeing and purging that involve feeling a lack of control over their eating. Many people with bulimia also restrict their eating during the day, which can lead to binge eating. Eating disorders can lead to very serious physical health problems. Anorexia or bulimia may cause dehydration and other medical complications like heart problems or kidney failure.

BINGE EATING DISORDER

Binge eating disorder, the most common eating disorder, occurs on average at least once per week, characterized by recurrent episodes of eating an amount of food that is larger than what most people would eat in a similar time period. Often times, people feel like they cannot stop or control how much they are eating. Binge eating episodes are often associated with eating faster than normal, eating until uncomfortably full, eating alone because of feeling embarrassed by how much they are eating or feeling disgusted with oneself, depressed, or very guilty afterward. Binge eating disorder is associated with severe obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other serious health conditions.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- **Whole Body:** dehydration, dizziness, fainting, low blood pressure, low body temperature, osteoporosis, water-electrolyte imbalance, or feeling cold.
- **Weight:** underweight, weight loss, extreme weight loss, or thinness.
- **Mood:** anxiety, apprehension, guilt, or depression.
- **Gastrointestinal:** constipation or vomiting.
- **Menstrual:** irregular menstruation or absence of menstruation.

TREATMENT

Treatment of an eating disorder generally includes a team approach. The team typically includes primary care providers, mental health professionals, and dieticians – all with experience in treating eating disorders. Treatment depends on your specific type of eating disorder. In general, it typically includes nutrition education, psychotherapy, and medication.

HELPING A FRIEND

Learn as much as you can about eating disorders. Know the facts about weight, nutrition, and exercise. Talk to them and stay positive, try to be understanding, offer support, and introduce the idea to seek out professional help. If you or a loved one think you might have an eating disorder, you can schedule a counseling appointment with one of our clinicians at Student Health Services by calling (909) 274-4400 or for more information, you can visit our Mt. SAC mental health webpage at bit.ly/mtsac-mentalhealth

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT EATING DISORDERS?

Contact the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) Helpline at (800) 931-2237 or visit nationaleatingdisorders.org

Note: If you suspect a medical or mental health emergency, such as threats of suicide or medical complications from eating disorder behaviors (such as fainting, heart arrhythmias, or seizures), seek medical attention immediately or call 911.