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| I am dealing with anger for missing out on my friends last 3 months of her life due to COVID since I could not go to the nursing home where she was in rehab to see her.  *I’m so sorry that your opportunity to say good-bye and spend time together was cut short due to COVID. Of course you are angry! COVID has changed so many of the important aspects and rituals of dying and mourning and it is hard to lose dear friends. There are so many that are having the same experience. Take pleasure and solace in all the ways that you did support and connect with each other all through life of your friendship. Hold tightly to the memories that you shared, to the friendship that you had, and all that you meant to each other. Create a ritual that provides you with a meaningful ‘goodbye’ with mutual friends who may be experiencing the same feelings. Cry, rage and laugh together as you honor your beloved friend.* | *Marsha Scott-Rollf* | *scottmc@fresnocountyca.gov* |

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| How do I help others who are experiencing the same things?  It’s an unusual situation for victim services providers to be experiencing, in real time, the same traumas and loss that our clients are experiencing. Admitting to them and to ourselves that this unprecedented situation requires flexibility in our practice, and self-compassion in our hearts. Ensuring that you are ‘walking the talk’ and taking your own advice for self-care is critical. We are only human and need to nurture our own wounds first, before we can provide nurturance to others. | Marsha Scott-Rollf | scottmc@fresnocountyca.gov |

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| Please include pets in noticing grief reactions.  *Thank you for raising this, Cynthia. For many people, their pets are family: assisting, protecting, comforting, playing. To lose a pet can be devastating. People mourn their loss as they would a family member. Often this is misunderstood by others and dismissed as not a ‘real’ loss. Take note of the importance of this loss for your clients, friends and family. In terms of pets grieving the loss of their owners/family member, note and acknowledge their grieving behavior and be patient, comforting and loving as you would a family member.* | Cynthia "Doss | LPC | LCSW" | cdoss@baldwincountyga.com |

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| Since the effects of this pandemic are unpredictable, and it looks like there is no end in sight, what do you suggest for managing this unpredictability/chaos?  *This uncertainty is one of the most difficult aspects of the pandemic and definitive answers are lacking: How long will it continue? When will there be a vaccine? Will I be safe?*  *Keeping ourselves grounded by establishing or maintaining a routine is a critical tool in the midst of unpredictability and chaos. While we cannot control the virus, remember to focus on what you CAN control, like our own behavior and self-protection. Take care of basics such as getting enough sleep, exercise, eating healthfully, pausing and breathing deeply, can all help to settle us. Allow yourself to look forward and dream about what you will do when this is over – planning a trip, or time with loved ones provides a long-term goal to focus on. If you do not have a meditation or gratitude practice, this might be something to consider, as there is evidence that confirms its health benefits in reducing anxiety.* | Debra Olson-Morrison | dmorrison@creativesystemstherapy.com |

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| Would it be possible to apply to the kids who are grieving too? For you! |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | I am the only minority in my office. I am struggling with other's not understanding racism. | Sandra Hunt | hunts@mcohio.org |   *Being the “only one” in an office is difficult on a good day, never mind during this time of racial reckoning. I encourage you to identify an ally, such as a coworker or supervisor, with whom you might discuss this struggle. Perhaps, there could be an openness to discuss racism within your workplace, or the national outrage and current racial justice movement. It is critical that white people are learning and speaking up about the issue of racism, educating and mobilizing themselves, so that individuals like yourself, are not alone, and do not need to carry this burden on your own. It’s not up to you to educate your coworkers, or be the lone voice representing your people. If you do not have ready allies, it would be worth speaking with your Human Resources Department, or with a trusted mentor, outside of the organization.* |
| Any self care tips for men? Trying to find resources for men who do not tend to express emotions.  *Thinking about self-care as the ways that an individual grounds or settles oneself in the face of trauma exposure at work might be useful; they include restorative (physically, emotionally, spiritual) practices as well as fun, socially connecting activities. Many self-care activities cross gender identity lines and do not require the articulation or expression of emotions. Many men find physical activities such as running, playing sports, etc. to be useful. Others are creative through playing music or singing, cooking, gardening, writing. Reading and doing crosswords or other puzzles provides relaxation and an emotional for some. I find that some men in the field dismiss self-care as “silly” or embarrassing, yet, if you explore what they do to restore their hope or faith, or help them release the burden of the stories they have heard, they may be able to list many things that are self-care, but which they would not identify as such.* |
| What about showing the mist in your eyes when hearing a victims story?  *We are all human and all of us cry. Having an emotional reaction to hearing a difficult or painful story is normal. And, having a physical reaction, such as misty eyes or even shedding a tear, is normal, as well. What we must not do is be incapacitated by our emotions, unable to respond to victims in the course of our job. Nor should a victim feel like they must now take care of us if we are moved by their story. Misty eyes do not keep up from doing our job. In fact, this may facilitate a stronger connection with the victim with whom you are working; give permission for that person to cry; know that you care, or, simply acknowledge a shared humanity.* |
| catamikacannon@sclegal.org |
| How do you recommend dealing with the grief of losing a job/employment?  *This grief can be swift and extremely painful, like a punch to the gut. It may feel like the world is ending, especially if you are providing for your family, or this job is part of your identity, or because this work is your calling. Acknowledging all of the pain and possible rejection that one feels is the first step. This is a big loss for any of us. Acknowledge that and consider what went well at the job, what did not, and what you may be looking for in the next job, are all ways to mobilize yourself to move forward. Recognize that this chapter of your career has closed, and now you must begin to look forward to what opportunities the next chapter may bring.* |
| Is it always preferable to send condolences in person or by phone? Is it appropriate to do by text?  *You want the person you are* *communicating to know that you care, that you are reaching out to express your support and concern. This is where rituals, such as a funerals, wakes or sitting shiva, provide the opportunity and structure for in-person expressions of condolence. A card or hand-written note can express that care, as does a phone call. A text can be an adjunct to these, but may feel insufficient considering the magnitude of the event for the mourner. Reaching out is what matters, and while it may be difficult because you feel that you don’t know what to say, that outreach and presence are what will matter to them, however you do it.* |

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| Do you believe Jesus Christ can be the ultimate healer with experiencing loss and grief?  *A person’s faith, and the rituals that are foundational to that faith, can be vital to some of those in mourning and provide them strength. For those whose faith involves Jesus Christ, that may provide the centering and healing that one requires. Prayer and Bible study may provide the strength, insight and the healing that the individual is seeking. Prayer (individual and collective), along with reading of important texts and seeking trusted religious counsel, can provide healing across many faith lines.* | Giselle | giselle.enciso@sjcda.org |

My significant other lost his brother to suicide at the beginning of the year. In arguments that we have had recently, he stated that I don’t ask him how he is doing. How do I ask him how he is dealing with that loss without triggering something? (anonymous)

*Your significant other is grieving, and, potentially, thinking about his brother in an ongoing way. Mourners are not in the position of “being reminded” or triggered – they have their loved one on their minds. Because suicide is so stigmatized and “shameful”, a suicide survivor is not likely to receive the same outpouring of support that one would receive through a “natural” death, hence they feel more alone. Fewer people talk to them about it, doubling the message that this is a bad thing to talk about. Further, it is very common for a suicide survivor to feel that he didn’t do enough in the relationship or feel that he did something harmful or wrong and feel guilty. It is unlikely that you will trigger something by reaching out and asking him how he is doing, since he is already thinking about his brother. Ask him to share a story about his brother. Ask to see some photos. Be prepared to listen and talk about his death, his life and your significant other’s grief, guilt and love. Reassure him that you care about him, his experience, and his healing. Then ask him how you can be more supportive and loving.*

I worked with a mother of a homicide victim who was obsessed with her son's manner of death and the homicide in general. I understood her need to know what happened, but it got to the point where it was concerning for her husband and there were some mental health issues at play. How can this be addressed without dismissing her grief? (anonymous)

*It is very common for homicide survivors to become obsessed with the details of their loved one’s death. It’s part of an attempt at control, when the event is so far out of their control; it’s a hope for information that there was nothing they could have done to prevent it; it’s a longing to know what their loved one’s last moments were like. As advocates, providing as much information as possible is important to do. In all cases, it makes sense to provide referral information to an experienced and trusted counselor or to one of the incredible survivor support groups or organizations that are out there. Homicide bereavement is unique, complex and long-lasting. Ensuring that the survivors receive the proper emotional support as well as regular contact with their medical doctor, is essential to help them do the needed trauma and grief work.*

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| What are some events you've seen that are meaningful to homicide victims during National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims or Survivors of Homicide Victims Awareness Month?  *So many! A gospel concert bringing multiple choirs together from many churches. Candlelight remembrances. The annual dedication of a stone, engraved with loved one’s names, installed in a city center’s “Garden of Peace”. A quilt created out of the victims’ clothing scraps. Scholarships. Relevant book drive with a library donation. Events calling attention to existing or new legislation related to gun control or other victim-related issues. Art events for children and/or adults creating mementos or group art. An annual “Walk for Peace”. An annual gathering at the statehouse for speeches and meetings with legislators. What are yours?* | Merissa Pimenta | mpimenta@victimsforjustice.org |

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| any resources for supporting teenagers specifically with grief? how to give them space to have their feelings and follow their lead, and also still parent?  *You’ve got it right there! Give them space to have their feelings and follow their lead. They will not always tell you what is going on with them directly and, like younger children, may “act their feelings.” You may be more likely to see withdrawal, sadness and misdirected anger. As a parent allowing for some of this while encouraging some healthy coping, (exercise, seeing friends, creative activities). If the misdirected anger becomes disruptive to the family, it would be best to have a quiet conversation during a calm moment to help them understand their reactions, express them and gently set limits on abusing innocent parents and siblings.* | Lenna Wertenbaker | lenna@mosaic-vt.org |

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| If you feel like you dealt with grief, you cried and you got angry and went through all that but you still feel lost and something just aint right, but you are going through the steps of the everyday to day. is there something that wasnt actually dealt with?  *There is no time limit on grief. We all want to feel better and sometimes get impatient with the time it takes to heal. If you are beginning to become concerned for yourself or a loved one, or if you feel that your grief is getting in the way of living your life and taking care of things, it may be time to see a therapist or counselor to take a closer look. Relationships are complicated and when someone is taken from us, we have a lot of feelings that range from grief, to guilt, to relief, and on. In addition, losing a loved one can trigger unresolved prior losses or traumas. Grief may also trigger a real depression. Do yourself a favor and reach out for the support you need.* | Michele Smith | chellereginasm@gmail.com |

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| relating to these kids I serve....are survivors from being exploited for debt bondage, etc. and witnessed other kids get abused or one ended up dying  *That is some complex trauma for those kids. In addition to images, sounds, smells and stories they may have in their minds, they may also be left with the guilt of being the one who got away, or the one who lived. This is called “survivor guilt”. They may also be struggling with guilt for not “saving” the others. This guilt is a normal outcome, however extremely painful to bear. The kids may not have this language, so you can help them put words to their experience, by carefully and gently speaking with them about it. Remind them how young, helpless and trapped they really were, that they did their best to survive themselves and that was all they could do. Remember to take care of yourself when exposed to this heartbreak.* | Evelyn Lee | ehikimaiana.next@gmail.com |