



CHADD's  
National  
Resource  
Center  
on ADHD

# ADHD Quick Facts

## ADHD, Grief, and Loss During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many disruptions and risks to life and health. For millions of people, the pandemic meant losing a loved one to illness, sometimes without the rituals and traditions that normally happen. Grief is still a personal experience, even when shared on a national level. For those coping with ADHD, the emotions of grief can intensify ADHD symptoms and create breakdowns in lifestyle and treatment support.

### ADHD and grieving loss

Losing a loved one affects attention, emotions, and self-regulation, and can make managing daily life a major challenge for those who grieve. For people with ADHD, dealing with such an emotional crisis can be even harder. Difficulties with regulating emotions and managing ADHD symptoms can become more pronounced during mourning and long-term grieving. When there is a death, especially in their family, [people experience at least some of these emotions](#):

- Denial
- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Shock
- Sadness
- Yearning
- Anger
- Humiliation
- Despair
- Guilt

ADHD symptoms and the symptoms of grief [tend to overlap](#):

- Trouble focusing and low attention spans
- Constant need to move body
- Distancing from peers or interests
- Poor school or workplace performance
- Difficulty learning new material
- Impulsivity
- Trouble eating or sleeping

Grief can also cause [physical symptoms](#), including stomach pain, loss of appetite, intestinal upsets, exhaustion, and sleep disturbances—each of which can make ADHD symptoms worse. For some people, a loss of interest in things they enjoyed can also occur.

### How you can live with grief beyond mourning

Losing a loved one creates a hole in one's life. Learning to live with the hole and restructuring one's life takes time. A common expression is "time can be healing." You will not always feel the pain of your loved one's loss as sharply as you do in the first year following a death. At some point, you will remember your loved one with more happiness than sadness and will move forward through the grieving process.



### Resources for Grief

SAMHSA's National Helpline – 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

[National Bereavement Online Resource Center](#) 206-298-1217 (9-5 PST)

[Grief, Loss, and Bereavement Support Groups](#). A listing of various support groups for grieving individuals.

[Finding a Grief Counselor](#)

[Bereaved Parents of the USA](#)

[The Compassionate Friends: Support After a Child Dies](#)



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Grief is a lot of work and withdrawing from some activities to have time to turn inward is a normal part of healing. For some people, however, grief can be so overwhelming that it becomes hard to function. If grief is severe and interferes with basic functions like eating, sleeping, working, or caring for those who depend on you, or if grief continues and impairs daily life after six months or more, then it is important to seek out professional support. Grief can trigger chronic depression that requires professional treatment.

There will always be moments when you will miss your loved one. But working through grief, maintaining treatment for ADHD and other health problems, and seeking support from caring friends and professionals can help you and your family recover and regain a sense of balance in your lives.



### **Support during grieving**

Grief is work that is best shared. It's important to find or create a network of support during this time, so you don't have to do the work alone. If you don't have a local network, reach out to a professional, members of the clergy, or national organizations for support.

Take time to move through the grieving process. Be aware of impulsivity and avoid making major life changes or signing legal agreements at this time, as these are decisions that may not serve you in the long term. Allow yourself and your family members extra time and be patient, as grief can often overwhelm someone at awkward times.

