



# GRIEF

BY MATT GUNDERSON AND PETE GUNDERSON

Everyone grieves at their own pace. There's no right or wrong way to grieve. It's devastating to lose someone you love, and in the current environment, it's even harder to process all the emotions of losing a loved one.

Physical and mental isolation is real and makes us all uncomfortable. For most, mourning is uncomfortable because it's a raw and rare emotion. Couple that with the other loss—the comfort of hugs and condolences delivered in person—and mourning becomes even more complicated. Especially if we're unable to say goodbye or spend time with our loved one before they pass.

But loss of life isn't the only thing we're grieving in today's world—we're all grieving in some way right now. All the same feelings of shock, disbelief, and denial are part of what many are experiencing in the face of a worldwide pandemic. There's loss of employment, daily routine, and even our way of life. Each day provides an experience very different from what we've known, and feelings of grief come upon us unexpectedly, sometimes in ways that are unrecognizable.

By now, practically everyone knows someone impacted in some way by COVID-19. Perhaps it's a lost job or pay

cut, or a postponement or cancellation of important plans, such as a wedding, birthday, anniversary, or graduation. Looking at one on its own doesn't seem like a reason to grieve, but when any are combined together or with the current state of affairs, feelings of loss can be just as powerful and real as the loss of someone you love.

Grief is a natural response, and it's important to recognize and acknowledge the feelings in order to make sense of them and allow us to redirect our energy in a constructive and positive way. This doesn't mean we won't still hurt over loss for years

or perhaps the rest of our lives, but the process of grieving allows the possibility of reinvesting the energy elsewhere to obtain a sense of peace rather than a place of pain.

A support network is the best way to work through the process of mourning the loss of someone or something integral in our lives. The spectrum of our emotions is so changeable, sometimes even irrational, that we may think that if we open the door we'll be consumed with sadness or rage. Yes, rage. It's a very common and perfectly normal reaction to loss. Reaching out for support from friends, family, or a spiritual counselor can help balance our thoughts and emotions. It's important to spend time remembering Grandma's pot roast dinners, laughing about how your beloved pet would wake you up at 3:00 a.m., or even the sweet luxury of meeting a group of friends for drinks and dinner.

*Matt Gunderson is operations manager and co-owner and Pete Gunderson is co-owner at Gunderson Life Celebration Centers, which was established in 1922.*



Matt Gunderson      Pete Gunderson



Support groups can be an important tool for those going through grief. While they're not for everyone, many find comfort in realizing they are not alone in the grief they're feeling. Even those who are initially hesitant.

**GENERAL GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS**

- Agrace HospiceCare Grief Support Center:** (608) 327-7118
- Bethel Lutheran Church:** (608) 257-3577
- Moving Through Grief at St. Dennis Catholic Church:** Kathy Saunders (608) 246-5124

**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR LOSS OF A SPOUSE**

- Widows and Widowers Group at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church:** (608) 271-6633
- The Circle of Weavers\* for women under age 55 at The Center for Life & Loss Integration:** linda.colletti@gmail.com

*\*Gunderson Funeral Home underwrites The Circle of Weavers.*

**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR THE LOSS OF A CHILD**

- The Compassionate Friends:** TCFMadisonWI@gmail.com
- Bereaved Parents of Madison:** bereavedparentsofmadison@gmail.com

**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE HAD A SIGNIFICANT LOSS**

- Agrace HospiceCare Grief Support Center:** (608) 327-7118
- Camp Glow (free for kids 6 to 14):** ssmhealth.com/CampGLOW

**DO-NOT-RESUSCITATE BRACELETS**

Direct emergency medical technicians, first responders, and emergency healthcare facilities' personnel. See also the Advance Healthcare Directives in the Essential Preparation section or Legal in the General section to set up advance healthcare directives which can detail your wishes when you are unable.

DO-NOT-RESUSCITATE BRACELETS (DNR) INFO (608) 266-1568  
dhs.wisconsin.gov/ems/dnr.htm

**FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES**

FOSTER FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICE (608) 661-3678 or (844) 363-7193  
fosterfuneralhomes.com

**GUNDERSON LIFE CELEBRATION CENTERS**

5203 Monona Dr., Madison 53716 (608) 221-5420  
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Information and support for those considering home funerals and natural burials. Educating and empowering families, individuals, and communities in preparing and caring for their own after death.