

Loving, Living, and Dying During COVID-19

FAQs for companions, families, guides, friends, leaders, and tenders for each other

I'm feeling anxious and overwhelmed. What can I do?

Put your hand over your heart; count to five and inhale and exhale. Take time to quiet yourself and think of five ways that you are safe right now. It's important to reach out when you feel overwhelmed.

- Therapists and spiritual directors are available through the Minnesota Death Collaborative ([MNDC](#)) or reach the Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

I'm worried about myself or a family member becoming ill. How can I reduce this anxiety?

Having conversations with your family can reduce anxiety about the unknown. Writing down your wishes and identifying what matters most is a practical way to get some relief.

- [The Conversation Project](#), [End in Mind](#), and [Honoring Choices MN](#) offer free resources.
- Advance care planners are available at [MNDC](#).

I know someone who is dying but I can't be physically present with them. What can I do?

You can still connect. Listening is the most important gift. Create a special place in your home with a photo, candle, and memorabilia to bring a sense of connection.

- Find a local doula through [MNDC](#).
- [NEDA](#) has a national directory of end-of-life doulas.

I've never been around a dead person. What if they are at home longer than I anticipated?

Death is not an emergency; it's perfectly OK if a dead person is not taken away immediately. Slow down and be present with them. With guidance, you can also care for your person's body.

- [MNDC](#), [MTN](#), and other guides are always available to walk you through this step-by-step.
- If they weren't receiving hospice care, contact your non-emergency police department number.

I have experience caring for the dead. Can I still care for the dead during this outbreak?

Yes, you can still care for the dead, but it's important to take some precautions. Wear a face mask and gloves, disinfect the person's nose and mouth, and make sure to use a plastic barrier.

- For local home death care guides and educators, contact [MNDC](#).
- See the [CDC's guidance](#), [National Home Funeral Alliance](#), and [Minnesota Threshold Network](#).

I've been told I can't have a funeral or memorial service right now. What can I do?

Saying goodbye and honoring your loved one is an essential part of grieving. Consider an online service to bring your community together. Alternatively, set aside time each day to reflect, create, or light a candle with your family or community. You can hold a service at a later date, and planning for it can be healing for you and your family.

- Celebrants and funeral directors are available on the [MNDC](#) website.
- See the [MN Dept. of Health Mortuary Science Section](#) and [Funeral Consumers Alliance MN](#).

I am overwhelmed by grief. Who can help?

Grief is natural and healthy. There is nothing to fix; all you can do is hold your broken heart and express your feelings. Mourn out loud. Find somewhere, something, someone to receive the story of your love. Be gentle with yourself. Give yourself permission to do less and slow down.

- [Brighter Days Grief Center](#) offers a variety of free practical and emotional support.
- [David Kessler](#) also provides strategies for coping with grief.

I want to honor my loved one but I feel isolated from my community. What can I do?

Creating a ritual is grief in action. You can send cards, light candles, say a prayer, send a handprint, paint a rock, share memories online or on the phone--any action you feel led to take.

- [1000 Hands' YouTube Page](#) and [MNDC](#) have ideas and resources.

I want to get involved and learn more about these topics. What are some local resources?

[MN Death Collaborative](#), [MN Threshold Network](#), [MN Death Cafe](#), [DevaNation](#), [Brighter Days Grief Center](#), and [Inspired Journeys](#) all contributed to this document and are valuable resources in our community.