

Life doesn't feel 'normal' right now. Some of us are working from home, some are juggling family commitments and responsibilities, others are adjusting to a new baby – all without our usual support networks and communities. David Kessler, a world-renowned grief and loss expert, says we need to give this new lived experience a name. That name is grief.

If we can name and acknowledge it as grief, it helps us to process, feel it and understand why we're a little uncertain, unsettled or on edge. Kessler believes that we are in a grief-illiterate society, meaning that we, as a community, want to fix things immediately – that people going through the grieving process are somehow broken and need to be fixed, when this is simply not true. We don't like to feel the wave of negative emotions that are associated with grief such as loss, sadness, anger, hopelessness or anxiety that seem to be on the rise now but we need to figure out how to manage this grief response more effectively.

So many of us, particularly new and expectant parents, are feeling so much loss. Some of these losses are wide-spread, applying to large portions of our community, such as loss of routine, job security, travel plans, work environments, physical touch and connection, gathering for meals and boundaries between home and work. Others are more specific to the pre and post-natal experience including the postponement of some IVF procedures, mothers groups, school for children and ante-natal classes. Loneliness and isolation can also be a trigger for other unfamiliar emotions, ones that you might not have felt before or in a long time. We have to help each other witness the grief and feel this collective loss, helping each other and knowing that it will ease.

At **Gidget Foundation Australia**, we understand how it feels. We hear so many stories of grief and loss – we know how hard it is to bear for you. It takes strength, patience and creativity to get through the challenges of staying at home, to be surrounded by the same people day-in and day-out. It may help to remember what you have done before that has helped you get through a stressful time. Take some deep breaths and remember a time that was tough – who did you reach out to? What did you do to lift your mood? What helped you feel better. Ask yourself who can help me or who can I reach out to virtually at this time.

People want to help, so reach out if that's what you need. If you can help take care of others, it can boost your mood too. Do what feels right, take it day-by-day and acknowledge how you're feeling. Try setting a daily goal – just one thing that will make you feel good that day. Maybe it's a walk in the sunshine, some yoga at home, a call with an old friend or a delicious meal you can mindfully enjoy.

Be compassionate towards yourself and know that you are not alone. Let's try to feel it a bit – to accept where we're at – then make a conscious effort to do something to feel better. Seek out support where you can. **Gidget Foundation Australia** is always here to help – let's heal together. 🌸

