

The Anniversary of COVID-19 Restrictions

It's been one year since COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic and lockdowns and other restrictions began in much of the world. The anniversary may bring up difficult memories or feelings. You may experience one or more of these reactions:

- ▶ **Disbelief.** We're a year into the restrictions and its accompanying life changes, but many people still have occasional thoughts like "It's all a bad dream" or "How did we end up here?"
- ▶ **Time distortion.** Many people say that time "doesn't feel real" anymore. The cancellation of a year's worth of annual events has some people feeling out of sync with the normal rhythms of their lives.
- ▶ **Grief.** Those who have lost a loved one to COVID-19 or another illness may feel the loss of that person anew. People may also grieve lost events, travel, or time with family and friends.
- ▶ **Anger.** Some people may feel frustrated by the circumstances, the behavior of others, or how long it is taking to get back to normal.
- ▶ **Difficulty with reminders.** It may be hard to cope with reminders of loved ones that have been lost or activities that are still unavailable. People may feel renewed disappointment about events that are being postponed for a second time or permanently cancelled.

If you are struggling with the anniversary of the COVID-19 restrictions, these steps may help:

- ▶ **Seek support.** Talk to family, friends, and co-workers about how you are feeling. A support group or individual counseling may also be helpful.
- ▶ **Practice good self-care.** Get proper rest, exercise, and nutrition. Journaling or practicing mindful meditation may help you cope with feelings of stress, anger, or grief.
- ▶ **Reach out.** Let people know that you are available to provide support and encouragement. Some people may want to reminisce about past events or the "before times."
- ▶ **Commemorate the anniversary.** Consider making a charitable donation to commemorate the anniversary. Writing a blog post or creating an art or craft piece may also help you mark the passage of time and memorialize those lost.

Seek help if:

- ▶ Feelings about the anniversary are causing disruption in your life, work, or relationships.
- ▶ You feel overwhelmed by your feelings.
- ▶ You worry that your reaction isn't "normal."
- ▶ You are using alcohol or other drugs to cope.

LifeMatters is available to help you manage your feelings related to the one year anniversary of the COVID-19 restrictions. Call 24/7/365.

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