



## COPING WITH COVID--STAGES AND ACTIONS

Consider these stages in order to identify what you and your family might need during each phase of the pandemic.

<u>Kubler-Ross's Stages of Grief</u>	<u>NEED</u>	<u>6 Stages of A Crisis</u>
<i>Denial /Shock/Disbelief</i>	INFO & CLEAR	<i>Anger</i>
<i>Anger</i>	LIMITS/COMMUNICATIONS	<i>Defensive</i>
<i>Depression</i>	CONTAIN/CONTROL	
	SUPPORT &	<i>Crisis</i>
<i>Bargaining</i>	STORY-TELLING	
	COORDINATED CHOICES	<i>Recovery</i>
	& "LETTING-GO"	<i>Depression</i>
<i>Acceptance</i>	LISTENING, CLEAR	
	CHOICES & OPTIONS	
	THOUGHTFUL PLANS	<i>Follow-up</i>

## **Kubler-Ross's Stages of Grief**

**Stage 1--Denial/Shock:** In this first stage, we often can't feel and think well enough to digest the reality of the situation. We need to provide and receive clear, concise information about the crisis. We need time and space to process all of the circumstances and consequences related to the crisis.

**Stage 2--Anger:** It is normal to feel angry in response to this pandemic at some point. Anger flows from fear. When we are scared, we feel unsafe. When we are uncertain, we feel insecure and vulnerable. We need to have and offer flexible yet firm expectations for our loved ones and ourselves in order to move through this stage. We can feel angry, yet we can't be mean. We can feel scared, yet we need to address our feelings of panic with a clearly communicated plan.

**Stage 3--Depression:** We often feel sad or depressed after our anger lifts. This stage is important because it allows us to process the reality of the situation with our minds, with our hearts, and through our bodies. When we allow the sadness to enter, we get to use all of the information at hand (i.e. thoughts, feelings, facts, fears, etc.)--to make better decisions. In this stage, we need to share our stories with trusted allies, loved ones or mentors. Our aim is to get and give support as a method to manage our feelings.

**Stage 4--Bargaining:** In this stage, we emerge with action that is not yet based on fully formed thoughts. We rationalize; we negotiate plans; we search for solutions. In order to make progress through this stage, we need to create opportunities for brainstorming. Our goals in this stage are to listen to all options and think through solutions. That will allow us to come up with clear options for moving forward.

**Stage 5--Acceptance:** Here, we consolidate our thoughts and emotional experiences in order to devise more thoughtful plans about how to respond to the crisis over time. By accepting the full reality of our situation, we can create solutions that will last over time for our families, our businesses, and our country.

## **6 Stages of Crisis**

**Anger:** This stage mirrors Kubler-Ross's 2nd stage of grief. We are thrown into feeling angry when we have sudden trauma or a crisis with a fast onset. The Denial stage may last longer when the crisis is initially further away or less impactful to our daily lives.

**Defensiveness:** In this stage, we revert to our instinctual stress response, either fight, flight or freeze. We struggle to adapt to our current reality and overwhelmed emotional states. We need communication that is simple, short, calm and clear.

**Crisis:** When the crisis is at its peak, as humans, we naturally "flock" to gain support, share our stories, and create survival strategies for the crisis at hand. Flocking is when we pull together our talents, share our resources, and help each other. In this stage, we need

human connection (physically distant with this crisis), strong support, and opportunities to have control over our choices within appropriate limits.

**Recovery:** During this time, we need to turn to routines and rhythms from our normal lives, and we should adapt those to create our “new normal” within the current crisis. We will work to coordinate our plans for our families about how we emerge from isolation safely. This will be a time that community conversations and parent-to-parent meetings will be our essential tools for crafting safely coordinated plans.

**Depression:** During this stage of the crisis, we will learn to “let go” of our ideas and expectations about how we run our lives. We will feel sad and confused, yet we will draw upon our experiences in order to create new plans to support each other. Leaders will need to walk us through the process of how to “let go” in a healthy way. We will work to maintain hope through our human connections while we rebuild better school and work systems for our families and in our communities.

**Following Up:** In this final stage of crisis, we will work together to devise thoughtful plans. We will use debriefing strategies--we should include opinions from broad sources and develop post-pandemic language that we can all rely on in order to communicate well parent-to-parent. We will consider vast ideas. We will review past and present systems. We will create better systems for the future.

These two stage theories suggest that most of all, we need human connection in order to take purposeful and meaningful action. It will require equal parts emotional acceptance and thoughtful action.

[Adapted from Kubler-Ross & Kessler's, "On Grief & Grieving," and  
<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/six-stages-of-crisis-11530400>]