

PROGRAM: Career Strategies

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

As we grieve what's been lost to coronavirus, experts share ways we can cope together

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As the coronavirus has ravaged society, leveled the economy, and buckled systems, it has created devastating losses. The loss of lives is the hardest, but even more widespread is the loss of jobs, routines, familiarity, social interaction — and, during these religious holidays, beloved traditions.

Those losses trigger grief amid the anxiety, panic, terror, and the rest of the emotions we are experiencing at this strange time. The Inquirer sought out insights from those who are supporting communities during this time to hear how they're helping people process their individual and collective grief.



"People are taking new jobs in the service industry, but service industry workers are at risk, and we worry about them," says Samara Fritzsche, a social worker and career counselor.

Samara Fritzsche, career counselor

We see clients from all walks to life, from GEDs to Ph.D.s. Regardless of what industry they are in, their mental health is affected by being out of work and having to struggle financially. People who were already dealing with feeling depressed and somewhat isolated because of being out of work are even more isolated now.

"Not knowing how long this will last is overwhelming for people." –Samara Fritzsche

There's tremendous anxiety about getting basic needs met, with food insecurity being a major issue. People who are out of work are worried about not being able to safely get food, and they're worried about the cost of food.

I was on a Zoom chat with a client who is alone and very isolated, and we decided we would watch *Jeopardy!* together later. We're professionals, but we're also trying to be there on a whole other level right now because people are so isolated. We are doing things outside the scope of what we traditionally do because we have to get people the resources they need.

Samara Fritzsche is a career counselor and licensed social worker who has been on the staff of JEVS Human Services, a Philadelphia nonprofit, for 15 years.

Note: this is an excerpt from a longer piece by the Inquirer.
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