

# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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## PERSONAL COUNSELING CENTER

### Grief Sucks

Hello Everyone,

Here we are at the last week of the semester. I hope you are doing well and take some time to reflect on what was likely the most unique semester of your academic lives so far. For those of you who are now done for the rest of the summer, take some time and celebrate, you made it! For those of you who are going to continue into the unknown that is summer classes, still take some time and celebrate. Don't lose sight of the fact that you made it through this semester and that is a considerable accomplishment. I hope that you all have a self care plan/routine ready to go for this summer. It seems like it will be a bit different than our standard Michigan summers, but I hope you still find time to relax and recharge and hey, even continue to read these newsletters.

I wanted to touch on the topic of grief again today. I felt that it was a good theme since for some of you, you are getting ready to graduate and finish your college careers. There will always be some level of grief and anxiety as you sit at this pivotal point in your life. However, this year is different. You have had half of your final semester as a Ferris student taken away from you. You didn't get to enjoy the goodbyes and celebrations of completion. You won't get to walk across that stage to and accept your diploma (not until later in the year anyway). Things that you were looking forward to are now not going to happen. This loss is going to cause us to grieve. We grieve the loss of what "should have been" and I am profoundly sorry you must go through this.

If you are not a graduating Senior, you still may be experiencing grief. We all lost out on half of our spring semester. We looked forward to coming back and finishing the year with our friends. The work we had left to do in our clubs and organizations. Elections of board members and saying good bye to those who were graduating. This is loss as well. Lets talk about how we can transition through these feelings.

The first major mistake we sometimes make in a situation like this is telling yourself "I have no reason to feel this way". "It's not that big of a deal that I missed out". Forgive me, but I must disagree with you. The things you missed out on DO matter. I think we may trying to convince ourselves it isn't important to try and protect from feeling that loss. If we minimize our emotions we tend to fool ourselves into thinking that they will go away. Trust me, they won't. The first step in healing from grief is acknowledging to yourself that what you are feeling is painful, and it's ok. Feeling sad, angry, cheated,

and/or shocked are all normal reactions. Allow yourself to feel (process) the emotions, don't try to push them down.

You may experience the emotions in waves. They may come on intensely when you think of your loss and after some time they may decrease. This eb and flow is normal and an indication that you are doing the right things. A sign that you are working through the emotions are the waves will become less frequent, the duration of the feelings will decrease, and the intensity of the emotions will decrease. For some of you, you may heal quickly and find that you move through your grief with relative ease. For others this may take more time. There is no right away to go through grief. It is more important that you allow yourself to go through it.

Self-care is especially important through this. Use your toolbox using varied kinds of self-care. Self-care in this case will look like processing emotions. Spend time with others who are grieving the same kinds of things as well. Parents of graduating seniors, friends, fellow club members. Everyone is going through loss right now.

Some resources for you all that may be helpful. [Here](#) is an article from Harvard Business Review I posted in my first newsletter that needs re-posting. [This](#) is a very comprehensive article from Verywellmind about grief. NPR has a great article about missing out on big events and how to help [Here](#). This is a [Video](#) from CNN with Anderson Cooper interviewing Stephen Colbert. The video is more about loss of family members and death but it is very powerful. Finally a TedTalk [Video](#) that talks about the journey with grief.

The university is hosting a virtual commencement ceremony on May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm and 9:00 am respectively. I encourage any graduating senior to tune in. You deserve to be celebrated for your accomplishment. It isn't the same as the real thing but it is still something to serve as a capstone to all of your hard work. I encourage you to take advantage of the rescheduled ceremony in person when it is announced. Congratulations! You did it!

Your homework this week is to be mindful of your mood. You may not be grieving at all and that is ok. You may be struggling right now and that is also ok. There is no right or wrong way to feel grief. Please take good care of yourself throughout the coming weeks.

Take Care of Yourself and Wash Your Hands

Andy