

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Dealing with Disappointment Due to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant upheaval in many areas of life, creating feelings of sadness and disappointment for many. Dealing with these emotions can be tough, especially if the situation that's causing you distress is ongoing. Your Assistance Program is here to help—our caring counsellors are available 24/7.

Allow yourself to feel disappointed

It's not helpful to judge yourself for feeling disappointed right now. You might be thinking "everyone's having a hard time right now—and some things are going well for me! What right do I have to complain?" But being kind to yourself means accepting where you're at now and what your needs are. Acknowledging your feelings is the best way to move through them.

Find healthy coping strategies

If you're feeling blue about the things you've had to give up because of the pandemic, it's normal to fall into patterns of dealing with these emotions. When sadness feels overwhelming, having healthy coping strategies can make you feel better than before.

These strategies can focus on giving you an opportunity to rest (such as taking a nap, having a bubble bath, taking time to meditate), relieving stress (reaching out to a friend, going for a walk, journaling, reading, listening to an upbeat playlist) or motivating you to action (exercising, creating a to-do list).

Re-frame the issue that's causing you disappointment

You might have felt disappointment in not achieving a goal that you felt in control of, such as changing or improving on a habit. You might have also experienced disappointment in external motivators that you have less control over, such as getting a promotion at work or getting to travel more.

Harvard Business Review reports that sometimes in order to cope with disappointment, people reduce their expectations to avoid getting disappointed further. For example—if you wanted to get in shape this year, but have found it difficult to do so in lockdown and with gyms closed, it might be tempting to say "I'll never lose the weight I want, I might as well eat a pint of ice cream."

This can actually lead to further disappointment, so it's important to stay away from defeatist thinking. A better way to re-think these goals would be to say, "I know I'm not where I want to be right now, but I can keep working towards my goal." Remember—small progress is still progress, and long-term change do not happen overnight!

If your disappointment is based on internal goals or milestones, re-framing them can be a useful tool to combat further disappointment. For example, maybe instead of the goal of "I'm going to lose 10 pounds this year," your goal could be more understanding of your situation, and kinder to yourself and your abilities—"I'm going to try to exercise twice a week indoors, and try to eat vegetables every day, to keep my body and mind healthy."

Manage your expectations going forward

Re-evaluate where you are, and start building new goals that won't lead to further disappointment. For example—it's natural to feel disappointed if you've had to cancel a trip this year. But even if it's been a

goal in previous years, “I want to visit two new countries this year” might not be an achievable goal right now (after all, travel restrictions are out of your control). Instead you might decide, “I’m going to explore as much of my city as is allowed under these guidelines”.

Or, you might consider putting off making goals for a little while—especially when it comes to regulations that are still in flux (such as seeing friends or family or travelling). You can always re-visit these topics in a week or a month if deciding what you want right now feels overwhelming.

Remember—these circumstances are not permanent

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant a lot of changes in the ways we live, play, and work. But it’s important to remember that these changes are not permanent. Although the disappointments can be very hard, there will be things to look forward to in the future.

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