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## Relias Spotlight Series

December 2021

Hello Providers,

Welcome to the Optum Idaho **December Relias Spotlight Series** — a series devoted to offering you access to **free, accessible and continuing education unit-eligible** online education about topics that are important to behavioral health providers.

It is time for the holidays and with that comes the excitement of parties, people gathering, events, traditions and celebrations. However, not everyone shares in the joy of the occasion. Many people are walking through a personal loss and associated grief which may cause them to feel anything but joy. Their lives may have drastically changed this year and their routines and ways of life that usually bring a comfort and feeling of stability may have been disrupted.

Loss of a loved one is not the only way a person experiences grief. Grief can happen with other types of loss as well. Some of those include:

- Loss of Job/Career
- Divorce
- Death of a pet

- Moving (loss of friendships and neighbors)
- Loss of a routine (school, sports, social activities)
- Loss of health
- Loss of innocence that comes from abuse or neglect



Some of the most common reactions to loss are:

- Feelings of loneliness and isolation, a desire to be alone or an inability to reach out to friends and loved ones
- Loss of control of your thoughts and feelings, feeling like you are “going crazy”
- Difficulty concentrating
- Numbness
- Guilt, remorse or constant anxiety over what you could have done differently
- Anxiety and fear
- Irritability, frustration and anger at yourself, someone else or the situation at hand
- Listlessness, lethargy and general exhaustion

Grief is a normal response to loss during or after a disaster or other traumatic event.

Common grief reactions include:

- Shock, disbelief, or denial
- Anxiety
- Distress
- Anger
- Periods of sadness
- Loss of sleep and loss of appetite
- Major change in routines

Children may show grief differently than adults. Children may have a particularly hard time understanding and coping with the loss of a loved one. Sometimes children appear sad and talk about missing the person or act out. Other times, they play, interact with friends, and do their usual activities. As a result of measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19, they may also grieve

over loss of routines such as going to school and playing with friends. Parents and other caregivers play an important role in helping children process their grief.



To support a parent whose child who may be experiencing grief or to support the child you may be treating, you may consider suggesting the following:

- Ask questions to determine the child’s emotional state and better understand their perceptions of the event.
- Give children permission to grieve by allowing time for children to talk or to express thoughts or feelings in creative ways.
- Provide age and developmentally appropriate answers.
- Practice calming and coping strategies with your child.
- Take care of yourself and model coping strategies for your child.
- Maintain routines as much as possible.
- Spend time with your child, reading, coloring, or doing other activities they enjoy.

Relias offers FREE continuing education unit courses specifically geared towards your needs. If you would like more information and education around the topic of loss and its impact on health, we encourage you to log into [Relias](#) and search for the following modules:

1. Supporting Adults in the Grieving Process – REL-BHC-0-SAGP
2. Caring for Caregivers: Supporting Individuals that are Supporting Others – REL-BHC-O-CCSISO
3. Calming Children in Crisis – REL-HHS-CWLA-CCC
4. Assessing and Treating Anxiety in Children and Adolescents – REL-BHC-0-ATACA
5. Anger Management – REL-ALL-0-AM

Thank you again for the work that you do each day with our members so that Idaho can continue to improve access to behavioral health services. Optum is excited to offer these resources to you.

Sincerely,

The Optum Education and Training Team