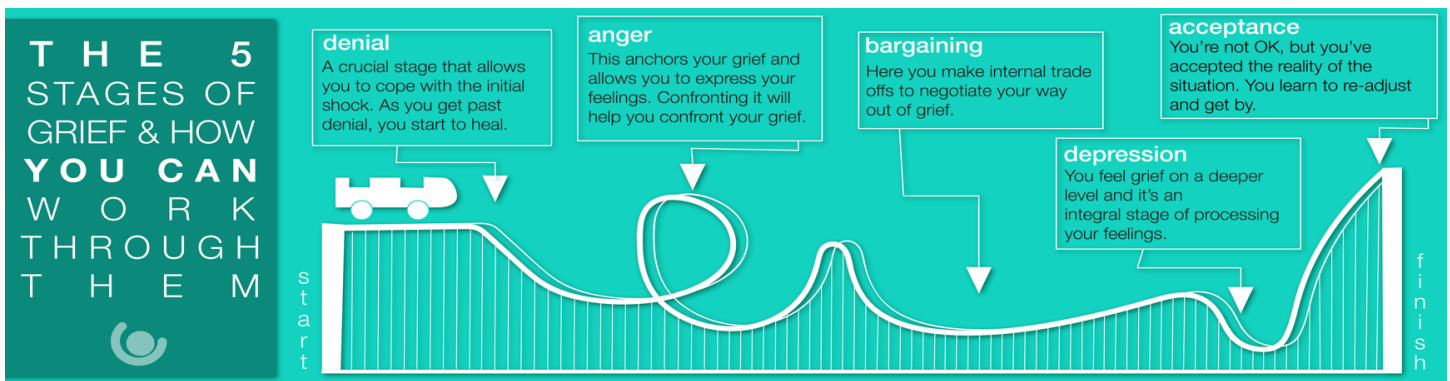


Monmouth University Student-Athletes

During this unprecedented time we are facing as a Monmouth University community and nation as a whole, we understand you have been additionally impacted by the loss of your athletic seasons. For some of you, this was going to be your first, for others this was your final collegiate season, and for many it was going to be your breakout year. Whatever the case may be, this is a heartbreaking and unexpected loss for many of you. Loss of irreplaceable time with teammates, coaches, moments on and off the field/track/course/diamond/court, conquering challenges, setting new records, overcoming obstacles, rehabbing injuries, and simply enjoying the sport you love.

During this time, every emotion you are feeling is completely valid and warranted. You may be feeling angry, frustrated, devastated, sad, worried, shocked, upset, heartbroken, or other emotions not listed here. You are grieving a loss. There will be a range of emotions you experience, and we hope that by reading this, it can help some of you channel, process, or cope with these emotions you are having during this difficult time.

You are all grieving a loss. Suffering a loss is never an easy thing to go through in life, and for some of you this may be the first time you have been without your sport. Framing this as a loss to grieve during this time may help you work through some of the emotions and thoughts you are experiencing. When dealing with a loss, there are often stages we go through on our process to facing it. You may cycle through this several times, you may not experience many of them, or you may experience them in a different order. However, sometimes knowing what to expect or identifying a process can help alleviate some of the pain.



The 5 Stages of Grief and How You Can Work Through Them. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.thetrainingroom.com/blog/health-and-social/march-2018/the-5-stages-of-grief-and-how-you-can-work-through>

Identifying Coping Strategies

Often when we have to stop playing our sport due to injury, illness, or unforeseen circumstances, we do not realize just how much it was doing for our mental health. For many of you, your sport is your outlet for worries, daily frustrations, anger, feeling down, etc. Without your sport as a physical outlet, we can often find ourselves feeling our emotions more intensely. For some, you may realize you are not sure how to cope with stronger emotions other than your sport. That is okay – and honestly, very common. You also may find yourself having significantly more free time than you are used to, as practice, lifts, travel, and competition often took up a large chunk of your time.

Brainstorming ways to cope:

1. Start by listing the things you enjoy doing in your free time. This can be something as simple as cooking or reading a book.
2. Next, think of things you have turned to in the past that have helped you cope with difficult times. This can include calling a friend or going for a run.
3. Look over a list of coping skills. As you read through it, take note of any idea you would be open to trying.
4. Keep this list somewhere visible or easily accessible. When our emotions are running high, it can be hard to think of what we can do in that moment. Having something tangible you can take out can help you come up with ideas of what to do in this moment and see if it helps distract you from the intense emotion or help you process it.
5. Try one, try another, then try another one! As you experience different emotions at different times, try out the list of skills you came up with to see what works for you and what doesn't.
6. Here is a list of coping skills you can start with. Feel free to google others for more ideas!

99 Coping Skills

1. Exercise (running, walking, etc.)
2. Put on fake tattoos
3. Write (poetry, stories, journal)
4. Scribble/doodle on paper
5. Be with other people
6. Watch a favorite TV show
7. Post on web boards and answer others' posts
8. Go see a movie
9. Do a word-search or crossword
10. Do schoolwork
11. Play a musical instrument
12. Paint your nails, do your make-up or hair
13. Sing
14. Study the sky
15. Punch a punching bag
16. Cover yourself with Band-Aids where you want to cut
17. Let yourself cry
18. Take a nap (only if you are tired)
19. Take a hot shower or relaxing bath
20. Play with a pet
21. Go shopping
22. Clean something
23. Knit or sew
24. Read a good book
25. Listen to music
26. Try some aromatherapy (candle, lotion, room spray)
27. Meditate
28. Go somewhere very public
29. Bake cookies
30. Alphabetize your CDs/DVDs/Books
31. Paint or draw
32. Rip paper into itty bitty pieces
33. Shoot hoops, kick a ball
34. Write a letter or send an email
35. Plan your dream room (colors/furniture)
36. Hug a pillow or stuffed animal
37. Hyper-focus on something like a rock, hand, etc.
38. Dance
39. Make hot chocolate, a milkshake or a smoothie
40. Play with modeling clay or Play-Doh
41. Build a pillow fort
42. Go for a nice long drive
43. Complete something you've been putting off
44. Draw on yourself with a marker
45. Take up a new hobby
46. Look up recipes, cook a meal
47. Look at pretty things like flowers or art
48. Create or build something
49. Pray
50. Make a list of blessings in your life
51. Read the Bible
52. Go to a friend's house
53. Jump on a trampoline
54. Watch an old happy movie
55. Contact a hotline/your therapist if you want, you can call us 1-800-448-3000
56. Talk to someone close to you
57. Ride a bicycle
58. Feed the ducks, birds or squirrels
59. Color
60. Memorize a poem, play or song
61. Stretch
62. Search for ridiculous things on the internet
63. "Shop" on-line (without buying anything)
64. Color-coordinate your wardrobe
65. Watch fish
66. Make a CD/play-list of your favorite songs
67. Play the "15 Minute Game" (Avoid something for 15 minutes, when time is up start again)
68. Plan your wedding/prom/other event
69. Plant some seeds
70. Hunt for your perfect home or car on-line
71. Try to make as many words out of your full name as possible
72. Sort through/edit your pictures
73. Play with a balloon
74. Give yourself a facial
75. Play with a favorite childhood toy
76. Start collecting something
77. Play a video/computer game
78. Clean up trash at your local park
79. Look at yourlifeyourvoice.org
80. Text or call an old friend
81. Write yourself an "I love you because..." letter
82. Look up new words and use them
83. Rearrange furniture
84. Write a letter to someone that you may never send
85. Smile at five people
86. Play with your little brother/sister/niece/nephew
87. Go for a walk (with or without a friend)
88. Put a puzzle together
89. Clean your room/closet
90. Try to do handstands, cartwheels or backbends
91. Yoga
92. Teach your pet a new trick
93. Learn a new language
94. Move EVERYTHING in your room to a new spot
95. Get together with friends to play frisbee, soccer or basketball
96. Hug a friend or family member
97. Search on-line for new songs/artists
98. Make a list of goals for the week/month/year/5 years
99. Perform a random act of kindness

YOUR Life YOUR Voice
www.yourlifeyourvoice.org

Other things you can try to help process this unexpected loss are:

1. Write a letter you will never send – this can be a great way to get out a lot of the anger or frustration you may feel during your anger stage of grieving. Write this letter to the college, the NCAA, your coach, etc. **You will never give them this letter, this is an exercise just for you.**
2. Write down all the things you are grateful, appreciative, or happy about during this time **and** the things you are angry, frustrated, hurt, or sad about. Right now, it is not about only being allowed to feel one thing – there can be space to hold **both** your positive and challenging emotions.
3. Journaling – sometimes our thoughts seem really intense when they are spinning around in our head. Writing them down on paper or typing them out can give them a place to go. It can help provide some release of these emotions or thoughts by putting them somewhere physical that is outside of your mind.
4. Find creative ways to get some physical release or stimulation. You may not be able to play, practice, or train with your teammates right now – in person, and how can you continue to engage the active part of your identity?
5. Try to stay connected to your teammates through setting up FaceTime lunches or dinners, doing workouts together, or using the Google Chrome Extension “[Netflix Party](#)” to watch something on Netflix together.

Contacting CPS

- Email mucounseling@monmouth.edu. CPS staff will be regularly checking email messages during typical hours of operation (Monday through Friday, 8:45 AM to 5:00 PM). Students should expect a response within one business day for answers to routine questions or to schedule a future appointment.
- For all emergency and urgent situations (i.e., thoughts of killing yourself or others, feeling an imminent risk to yourself or others, hearing or seeing things that are not there), students should call MUPD at 732-571-4444 or 911. MUPD will collaborate with the counselor on duty from CPS, if necessary.

Please note:

- By contacting CPS or scheduling a phone or video appointment, you are consenting to receive a response and/or services from CPS electronically or digitally.
- Due to New Jersey regulations and licensing board statutes, CPS staff might be unable to provide clinical services to you, depending on where you currently reside. In these cases, we will work with you to identify resources in your area.

As always, Hawks Fly Together!