



# Long COVID Symptoms<sup>6</sup>



Long COVID, the condition where symptoms that surface after recovering from COVID-19 linger for weeks, months, or even years, is still a mystery to doctors and researchers. We still don't know why only some people develop the condition or why others can get it after a mild COVID-19 infection.

## Proposed Cause Theories:



**Residual Organ Damage:** symptoms may be caused by damage from initial infection



**Remaining Virus:** small amounts of the virus may persist in the body and cause an immune response



**Exaggerated Immune Response:** the immune system remains in an excited state even after the initial infection is resolved

## Fostering Wellness Through Community

Rebuilding a sense of community is key to healing LGBTQ people from the traumas of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Reaffirming importance of "chosen family"
- Virtual LGBTQ events and gatherings
- Social Media can provide a space for otherwise isolated LGBTQ people to find education and community, especially LGBTQ youth<sup>4</sup>
- Mutual aid and political activism
- Support groups
- (Re)building a sense of "mattering"

## Acknowledging COVID as Shared Cultural Trauma<sup>7</sup>

The COVID-19 Pandemic is an unprecedented event that has caused great loss and trauma across many communities. Thus, trauma-responsive, strengths-focused treatment methods may be effective.

- What behaviors have helped you survive your traumatic experiences (during and afterward)?
- What are some of the creative ways that you deal with painful feelings?
- What characteristics have helped you manage these experiences and the challenges that they have created in your life?
- How do you gain support today? (family, friends, activities, coaches, counselors, other supports)
- What does recovery look like for you?

## Validating Disenfranchised Grief<sup>8</sup>

1 in 5 White LGBTQ people and 1 in 3 POC LGBTQ people personally know someone who has died of COVID-19.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, studies show that suicidal ideation was high for many LGBTQ people during the pandemic.<sup>1,3</sup> Many LGBTQ Elders may also be carrying around a familiar pain from having lived through the AIDS Crisis.<sup>5</sup>

With these facts in mind, it is important to recognize the pain that many LGBTQ people are carrying.

- LGBTQ people who have lost a partner/spouse or other loved one often do not have the same types of support as non-LGBTQ people.
- LGBTQ people may feel they cannot openly acknowledge or publicly mourn a partner, or may find that others minimize their loss—a problem often referred to as disenfranchised grief.
- Such disenfranchised grief is common among those who survived the HIV/AIDS crisis but lost so many of their peers.
- Losing a loved one to suicide further disenfranchises grief due to the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide.
- In addition, disenfranchised grief may itself be a risk factor for suicide.

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