

Complicated Grief

Susan Wesner RN, MSN,CS
Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic

Major Categories of Loss

- ◉ Death of a Loved One
- ◉ Loss of a Significant Person or Relationship
- ◉ Divorce or Separation
- ◉ Diagnosis of a Loved One (Medical or Psychiatric)
- ◉ Non Death Loss of a Friend (Move, Betrayal)
- ◉ Loss of a Pet
- ◉ Loss of Parts of Self
 - > Physical (Surgery, Accident, Aging)
 - > Self Esteem, Hopes, Dreams
- ◉ Loss Due to Life's Transitions
 - > Marriage, Retirement, Graduations
 - > The Empty Nest
- ◉ Loss of Material Objects (Fire, Flood, Theft, Repossession)

Grief

- Grief is the experience of loss
- Grief is reactive and passive
- Grief is the beginning
- To be bereaved means to have suffered a loss
- Mourning is the emotional and cognitive expression of grief
- Mourning is proactive
- Mourning is grief gone public

○ Grief is experienced in four ways

◆ Affectively

◆ Behaviorally

◆ Cognitively

◆ Physically

Affective Manifestations of Grief

- ◉ Sadness, anger, anxiety, loneliness, and guilt
- ◉ Symptoms of grief may meet criteria for a diagnosis of an affective disorder
 - > Function vs. dysfunction
 - > Very similar to an anxiety disorder

Behavioral Manifestations of Grief

- ◉ Old life and patterns lose meaning
- ◉ Disruptions in patterns of conduct
 - > Inability to follow daily patterns
 - > Disorganized
 - > Restless

Cognitive Manifestations of Grief

- ◉ Preoccupation with images and the thoughts of the deceased
- ◉ Difficulty concentrating
- ◉ Hallucinations

Physical Manifestations of Grief

- Weakness
- Appetite changes
- Feeling of choking
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Dry mouth
- GI disturbances
- Fatigue
- Exhaustion
- Sleep complications
- Panic attacks

Tasks of Grief according to:

- ◉ Elizabeth Kubler-Ross
- ◉ William Worden
- ◉ Therese Rando

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1969)

- ◉ Denial and isolation
- ◉ Anger
- ◉ Bargaining
- ◉ Depression
- ◉ Acceptance

William Worden (1982)

- ◉ Accept the reality of the loss
- ◉ Experience the pain of the loss
- ◉ Readjust the environment
- ◉ Reinvest emotional energy in other relationships

Therese Rando (1993)

Six "Rs", the process of mourning:

1. Recognize the loss
2. React to the separation
3. Recollect and Re-experience the deceased and the relationship
4. Relinquish the old attachments to the deceased
5. Readjust to move adaptively into the new world without forgetting the old
6. Reinvest

Influence on Grief

- ◉ Cause and circumstances of the loss
- ◉ Family relationships after the loss
- ◉ Relationships within the support system before the loss

Grief and Mourning (Rando)

- Assumptive world:
 1. Expectations about the world in general (God is good, the world is fair, etc)
 2. Assumptions about people (I will be supported, my family will be there when I get home, etc)
- When a loved one dies, one's assumptive world is shattered. Philosophical questions asked, i.e. "How could God do this to me because I have been good?" Expectations are violated.
- Caregivers must deal not with the death of a loved one, but with the assumptive world of the griever

Appropriate Expectations in Grief

You can expect that:

- Your grief will take longer than most people think
- Your grief will take more energy than you would have ever imagined
- Your grief will involve many changes and be continually developing
- Your grief will show itself in all spheres of your life: psychological, social and physical

Appropriate Expectations in Grief

- Your grief will depend upon how you perceive the loss
- You will grieve for many things both symbolic and tangible, not just the death alone
- You will grieve for what you have lost already and for what you have lost for the future

Appropriate Expectations in Grief

- Your grief will entail mourning not only for the actual person you lost but also for all of the hopes, dreams, unfulfilled expectations you held for and with that person, and for the needs that will go unmet because of the death
- our grief will involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions, not solely those that are generally thought of as grief, such as depression and sadness
- The loss will resurrect old issues, feelings, and unresolved conflicts from the past

Appropriate Expectations in Grief

- You will have some identity confusion as a result of this major loss and the fact that you are experiencing reactions that may be quite different to you
- You may have a combination of anger and depression, such as irritability, frustration, annoyance or intolerance
- You will feel some anger and guilt, or at least some manifestations of these emotions
- You may have a lack of self-concern

Appropriate Expectations in Grief

- You may experience grief spasms, acute upsurges of grief that occur suddenly with no warning
- You will have trouble thinking (memory, organization, and intellectual processing) and making decisions
- You may feel like you are going crazy
- You may be obsessed with death and be preoccupied with the deceased

More on Grief

- ◉ Grief involves many changes over time
- ◉ Grief is natural
- ◉ Grief is a reaction to all types of loss
- ◉ Grief is unique to the individuals perception of the loss

Traumatic Grief

Kathy Shear, MD

- Persistent intense yearning or longing for the person who died
- Frequent intense feelings of loneliness or like life is empty or meaningless without the person who died

continued

- Recurrent thought that it is unfair to have to live when the person they love died, or a recurrent urge to die in order to find or to join the deceased or because life seems unbearable without this person
- Frequent preoccupying or intrusive thoughts about the person who died, e.g. thoughts or images of the person are so frequent that they intrude on usual activities or interfere with functioning

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