



COMMON GRIEF REACTIONS

PHYSICAL

Fatigue
Lack of energy
Sympathy pains
Hollowness
Gut Sensations
Tightness in chest
Shortness of breath
Dry mouth
Increased noise sensitivity
Pain
Sleep disturbance
Restless
Tension
Exhaustion

EMOTIONAL

Sadness
Loneliness
Anger
Guilt
Anxiety
Shock
Yearning/Longing
Relief
Numbness
Depression
"Grief Attacks"
Fear
Helplessness
"Crazy"/Out of Control
Insecurity
Resentment
"Just don't care"
Diminished self-concern
Sorrow for one who died
Betrayal/ Disloyal
Emptiness

MENTAL

Disbelief
Distracted
Absent-minded
Forgetful
Low motivation
Dreams of deceased
Poor concentration
Preoccupation w/ loss
Images of deceased
Expecting to see deceased
Confusion
Memories of other losses
Lack of focus
Denial
Disorientation

SOCIAL

Social withdrawal
Diminished desire to
conversation
Being single
Feeling of need to "take care
of others"

BEHAVIORS

Searching
Crying/Tears
Carrying special objects
Going to grave site
Keeping an altar
Keeping belongings intact
Looking at photos
Listening to music
Talking to the deceased
Avoidance of grief arousal
Changes in daily routine

SPIRITUAL

Questions about God
Why would God allow this
to happen?
How are they?
Where are they now?
When will I die?
Will I see them again
when I die?
What will happen to me
when I die?
Sensing the presence of the
deceased

William Worden's 4 tasks to grieving

1) Accept the fact of the loss

Initial Reaction (even if death is anticipated)

Numbness

Shock

Unreality

Conscious Acceptances

Through tangible proof – seeing the body

Through reasonable proof – death certificate, dental records, etc.

Subconscious Acceptance

Cessation of automatic visual and auditory “searching”

2) Experience the pain/ feel the feelings

Physical Pain

Emotional Pain

Mental Pain

Social Pain

Spiritual Pain

Behavioral Pain

3) Adjust to the environment without the deceased

Practical matters – legal, financial, notify others

Decisions – what to do with.... Clothing, belongings, room

Adjustments: new family patterns, contact with deceased (cemetery, altar, etc.),

“special” times, coping with social changes

4) Reinvesting in life's other relationships

Takes place slowly over time

Characterized by successes and setbacks

Helping others help you

Some signs of reinvesting:

Pain lessens in frequency, intensity and duration

Good days out-balance bad ones

Ability to enjoy old activities or take on new ones without overload

As grief “softens” you are able to talk about loved one with more happiness

Ability to recognize both good and bad characteristics of deceased

Can encounter grief and pain in another with compassion and empathy and

without re-emergence of own pain