

Grief/Loss

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Description of Grief/Loss

Definition

- Grief can be defined as the “emotion, generated by an experience of loss and characterized by sorrow and/or distress and the personal and interpersonal experience of loss” (Humphrey, 2009, p.5). Grieving after a significant loss, the death of a loved one or other loss, is a normative process. Most people proceed through this process with help of family, friends, community support, or alone without complications. However, a significant minority of people develop complications in this process.
- Complicated Grief is a “debilitating clinical condition that can develop after the death of a loved one” (Boelen, Keijser, van den Hout & van den Hout, 2007 p. 277). It is important to note that complicated grief can stem from the death of a loved one but can also occur in grief situations unrelated to death, including, but not limited to, the loss of a job, a geographical move, or a divorce. An estimated 10 to 15 % of bereaved individuals develop complicated grief experiencing symptoms of intense yearning for the lost loved one, intrusive and troubling images or thoughts of the death, feelings of inner emptiness, difficulty accepting the reality of the loss, and difficulty trusting others (Howarth, 2011; Neimeyer & Currier, 2009). It is important to note that complicated grief is often clinically noticeable in that the person appears “stuck” in the grieving process. Where, and why, the person is stuck is critical to identify in the therapeutic process. The “sticking point” is where intervention is needed.

- Complicated grief is associated with clinically significant W where the loss is combined with trauma to accomplish mental health, education, and career goals (2010). Grief is a developmental milestone which directly affects the mental health of the client. Complicated grief is a developmental process that is causing significant distress to the client.
- According to US government statistics, approximately 36% of the population experience grief (Howarth, 2010). Approximately 10-15% of those developing complicated grief (Howarth, 2010).
- There is a possibility of an increase in demand for grief therapy as veterans with dealing with the vast amount of losses they may encounter.

Resources: <http://www.counseling.org/Resources>
<http://www.theravive.com/services/grief-and-loss.htm>

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- Rosner, R., Pfoh, G. & Kotouc, M. (2011). Treatment of complicated grief. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 72(10), 1230-1235. doi:10.1093/ajph.72.10.1230