

## **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 signif cant
  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 signif cant
  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 signif cant W where the loss is combined with trauma iolent death, or a loss outside the life expectations and experiences of the indis to accomplish mental hieralthilucation, and career go 2010). Grief is a developmental milestone which directly affects the me course of his or her life. Complicated grief is a developmental process the metal milestone which directly affects the metal milesto
  - According to US government statistics, approximately 36% of the popular approximately 10-15% of those developing complicated grief (Howard)
  - There is a possibility of an increase in demand for grief therapy as veter 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

ner and is causing signif cant distress to the client.

One evidence-based procedure is Complicated Grief Therapy (Shear, Frank, Houch, & Reynolds, 2005) which involves specific procedures to help the grieving individual directly approach the painful aspects of the loss and, at other times, focus on current and future goals. This treatment is based in Attachment theory and was conducted over 16 weeks and was compared to interpersonal therapy. This treatment approach demonstrated greater healing than interpersonal therapy.

Resource: Wetherell, (2012) Complicated grief therapy as a new treatment approach. D = C - c. c = c. 14, (2), 159-166.

Resource: Rosner, R., Pfoh, G. & Kotouc, M. (2011). Treatment of complicated grief. , 2. doi:10.3402/ejpt.v2i0.7995

Both resources contain multi session outlines based on theory supported by current research as being effective with complicated grief. Most approaches using the Dual Process Model follow similar protocol of discussing the difficult aspects of the loss alternating with discussions of positive coping such as learning to cook, meeting new people, or finding meaningful work. Faulty cognitions identified in the discussions of the loss are challenged by exploring and "gathering evidence" of the ù c dis o dis p ch ei 1 cQ c rj 1 1 ev

Prigerson H. G, Horowitz M. J, Jacobs S. C, Parkes C. M, Aslan M, et al. (2009) Prolonged grief disorder: Psychometric validation of criteria proposed for DSMV and ICD-11. PLoS Med 6(8). doi:10.1371/journal. pmed.1000121

Rosner, R., Pfoh, G. & Kotouc, M. (2011). Treatment of complicated grief.

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