

Grief and Depression: The Differences

Complicated Grief

Sleep Disturbances- Fatigue
Appetite Disturbances
Inability to Concentrate
Diminished Sexual Interest
Lack of Joy-Empty Mood
Physical Symptoms and Pain
Irritability
Anxiety
Loss of Identity

Depression

Sleep Disturbances- Fatigue
Appetite Disturbances
Inability to Concentrate
Diminished Sexual Interest
Lack of Joy-Empty Mood
Physical Symptoms and Pain
Irritability
Anxiety
Loss of Sense of Self
Hopeless, Helpless Feeling
Suicidal Thoughts

The major difference between grief and depression is VISION.















*A grieving person can see the light at the end of the tunnel and works to move towards it, while the person suffering from depression finds the light blinding and can stay paralyzed in it!

For more information, a wonderful source is:

* *The Overdiagnosis of Depression: Recognizing Grief and Its Transformative Potential* by Kohn M. Schneider, PhD.



Grief and Trauma: The Differences

Grief	Trauma
<p> Grief usually does not attack or distort us.</p>	<p> Trauma most often attacks and distorts us through our identity.</p>
<p> Guilt with grief leaves us feeling like I wish I would have...</p>	<p> Traumatic guilt leaves us feeling like we could have prevented it or we should have been the victim.</p>
<p> Grief related dreams tend to be about the person who died.</p>	<p> Trauma dreams tend to be about us being hurt or dying.</p>
<p> Our most prominent feeling is SADNESS.</p>	<p> Our most prominent feeling is TERROR.</p>
<p> The public and professionals generally know we are grieving.</p>	<p> The public and professionals often do NOT know we are traumatized.</p>
<p> In grief, our pain is related to the loss of our loved one.</p>	<p> In trauma, our pain is related to our trauma and powerlessness and fear.</p>
<p> Anger in grief is usually not destructive.</p>	<p> Anger in trauma, becomes assaultive and combative.</p>

Trauma Reactions Overpower Grief Reactions

Tips for Teachers: Grieving Children in the Classroom

If a child has not been diagnosed with a mental health disorder and has no history of a mental health disorder, the child may still suffer due to the painful journey of bereavement. The following tips were written by Carol Swift, a teacher who worked specifically with student with special needs.

1. During the school year, for many children and adolescents, the classroom is the primary environment. In small, day-to-day ways, teachers can help students understand that we all grieve differently, there is no right or wrong way to grieve, and grief is not something we get over, but something we work through - a process, not an event.
2. Weeks, months, and even years after a death, students might experience sudden, intense feelings of grief in the classroom setting. It is helpful to have a plan in place that allows these students to leave the classroom and go to the counselor's office or other designated area. Some teachers and counselors call these "grief passes." They help the student feel more secure when unexpected and sometimes frightening grief bursts or grief attacks occur.
3. Distractibility, disorganization, impaired memory, weak attention span, absentmindedness, and faulty reasoning are common symptoms of grief. Students are relieved when teachers acknowledge the way these impact learning and academic performance.
4. If temporary learning modifications and accommodations are needed, asking students for their input in planning them and instituting them reinforces to students that their needs are important.
5. Students might display hyperactivity or underactivity, regression or hypermaturity, anxiety, acting out, or symptoms of physical distress. Teachers' observations of these behaviors are valuable to school counselors and psychologists as they work with grieving students in individual or group settings.
6. Secondary losses are part of the grieving process. Loss of security, loss of identity, loss of hopes and dreams, loss of roles, loss of lifestyle, and loss of safety may accompany grief. Teachers are a source of constancy for children and adolescents and can offer them understanding and support as they mourn these losses.
7. It is helpful for teachers to allow students to show them how they feel about school. Some students hope for school to be a place where teachers and classmates will ask them about their loss and express concern for them. Others want school to be a place where they can resume normal activities and not feel they are being seen only as the boy or the girl whose _____ died. It is natural for students to frequently vacillate between the two.
8. Children and adolescents often naturally accept their pain in increments. At times they allow themselves to be part of the pain, and at other times, they move away from it, taking a break from the process. Teachers have daily opportunities to walk with students through all aspects of their grief journeys.

The Bereavement Process: According to Leslie Delp

Shock and Numbness

"Zombie-like" physical symptoms including: aching arms and heaviness in chest, headaches and irritability. Concentration difficulties to the point of annoyance. Lack of joy, sleep disturbances and appetite issues are present. Most resembles depression. ("The brain's way of protecting the body")

Feelings

All emotions; Anger and guilt are most prominent. Positive and negative coping strategies used, negative ones to numb the pain. Drugs and alcohol are common negative coping strategies for teens. Sex can be a typical outlet for young girls. Using negative coping strategies cycles you back to numbness. (You've got to feel it to heal it; You must move through your grief by slowing down, turning inward and facing your pain)

Assimilation

Who am I NOW? Weave the broken threads of their lives into a firm pattern of meaning, Victor Frankl shared this philosophy after his release from Auschwitz. Concentration camp during WWII. Each person will work to assimilate, or take into who they are, the loss and what it means to their life now. (Take the loss into who you are now, making it a part of you - your "new normal")

Reconstruction

Tangible way people work through their grief, ie. Working for a cause that holds meaning. They reconstruct their lives to reflect their loss. They begin to reach back in an effort to help others instead of reaching out for help for themselves. (Ready to give back; cancer walks, build a church in the Dominican Republic, volunteer at a charity, etc.)

✿ The Bereavement Process is life long, time makes it less intense but there are always triggers.

✿ Grief is very unique, like a fingerprint; It is related to the relationship you had with the person who died.

It's MY Choice To Be a Survivor...

or A Victim

**I have choices in how I will cope with my grief.
I can choose:**

TO seek out people who will listen and care when I need support
OR...

I can retreat from life and isolate myself from sources of support.
TO search for meaningful things that give my life a sense of purpose
OR...

I can decide I have no hope or purpose and that I have nothing to live for.
TO realize that my loss is only one of the factors in my life
OR...

I can see myself only as bereaved, allowing the experience
of death to blacken and disrupt all aspects of my life.
TO communicate to friends and family when I need help
OR...

I can wait for others to discover what I need, get angry and pity
myself when they don't.
TO assimilate into my changed life by taking action and giving
meaning to the loss
OR...

I can pity myself over the changes and what I can no longer do
about them.
TO try to understand how others, especially my family feels, that
they hurt too
OR...

Feel that absolutely no one can understand me and what I am
going through.
TO look for ways to FIGHT BACK against negative feelings and
behavior
OR...

Feel that I am helpless and at the mercy of fate.
TO talk about my fears with someone I trust
OR...

Bottle up my fears, and the trauma inside of me, which gives it
enormous power over me.
TO understand that mourning is necessary, and I will reconstruct
my life with meaning I feel attached to my loved one
OR...

Be ashamed to mourn and pretend that I am fine.
TO be angry at the circumstances of death and seek comfort and
strength I deserve from my faith
OR...

I can blame others for my circumstances and become bitter.