

Sudden Loss

Issues created for survivors of sudden loss

- Intensified grief
- Shattering of personal worldviews
- Secondary losses

Intensified grief

- No opportunity to prepare, say good-bye, or finish unfinished business
- Regular coping abilities are overwhelmed
- Strong emotions such as shock, anger, guilt and hopelessness

Shattering of personal worldview

- Heightened sense of vulnerability and anxiety
- No sense of choice or control
- Search for meaning can challenge spiritual resources

Secondary losses

- Financial difficulties
- Intrusion of media, law enforcement, courts, insurance companies
- Changes in support system
- Societal stigma

Other factors that impact the grief/mourning after a sudden loss

- Nature vs. Human as cause of death
- Degree of intentionality
- Degree of preventability
- Perception of suffering
- Proximity to site of death
- Duration of event
- Low point of event

(Adapted from *Living With Grief After Sudden Loss* edited by Kenneth Doka, PhD, Hospice Foundation of America, 1996)