

COMMON GRIEF REACTIONS IN ADULTS

Physical

- Pain
- Fatigue/exhaustion/low energy
- Sleep changes/disruption
- Appetite changes
- Shortness of breath, tight or heavy feeling in chest
- Feeling of tightness in throat
- Hollow feeling in stomach
- Stomach upset or pain
- Dry mouth
- Muscle tension or agitation
- Increased sensitivity to light, sound, smell, or other stimuli
- Clumsiness

Social & Familial

- Isolation from others
- Withdrawing from social activities
- Diminished desire for conversation and interaction
- Shifting roles in relationships
- New responsibilities
- Hiding/holding in grief
- Difficulty relating to old friends or those who aren't grieving
- Losing friends, making new friends

Emotional

- Shock, numbness, emptiness
- Sadness, sorrow
- Loneliness, longing, yearning
- Anger, resentment, betrayal
- Guilt, regret
- Fear, anxiety, insecurity
- Feeling helpless, out of control
- Relief
- Diminished self-concern
- Desire to join the deceased
- Restlessness, listlessness, irritability
- "Emotional roller coaster"

Behavioral

- Crying
- Searching
- Carrying mementoes or holding onto deceased's belongings
- Going to grave, ash-scattering site, special places
- Making and keeping an altar
- Looking at photos or videos
- Listening to tapes viewing videos of deceased
- Talking to deceased
- Avoiding situations that arouse grief
- Keeping busy to avoid emotion
- Assuming mannerisms of deceased

Mental

- Denial, disbelief
- Confusion, disorientation
- Absentmindedness, forgetfulness
- Diminished focus, attention span
- Low motivation
- Expecting to see or hear from deceased
- Preoccupation with deceased and story of the death, need to tell and retell story
- Dreams/images of deceased
- Thinking one sees, hears, smells deceased
- Memories of past losses

Spiritual & Existential

- Questions about God, higher power
- Affirming spiritual beliefs
- Doubting religion/spiritual beliefs
- Questions about the deceased: Where are they now? Are they all right? Can they see me? Will I see them again?
- Questions about mortality, afterlife: What will happen when I die? Is there a heaven/afterlife?
- Existential questions: What is the meaning of my life? What is my purpose now?
- Sensing the deceased's presence, smell, sounds in dreams or waking life
- Awe, wonder, mystery