COMMON GRIEF REACTIONS
The symptoms below are expected during bereavement. Each person will experience a unique blend of some or all of the symptoms and perhaps some that are not listed.

MENTAL
• Disbelief
• Confusion
• Disorientation
• Absentmindedness
• Forgetfulness
• Poor Concentration
• Distraction
• Difficulty focusing and attending
• Low Motivation
• Expecting to see the deceased
• Expecting the deceased to call
• Preoccupation with the deceased
• Need to tell and retell story
• Dreams or images of the deceased
• Denial
• Thinking about other deaths and losses

PHYSICAL
• Pain
• Fatigue, Exhaustion, Low Energy
• Sleep disruption
• Appetite disruption
• Shortness of breath
• Tight or heavy feeling in chest
• Feeling of tightness in throat
• Hollow feeling in stomach
• Stomach pain and upset
• Heartache, broken heart
• Dry mouth
• Tension
• Restlessness, irritability
• Increased sensitivity to stimuli
• “Grief Attacks
• “Sympathy pains”

SOCIAL
• Being isolated by Others
• Withdrawing from social activities
• Diminished desire for conversation
• Being “widowed”, “single,” etc.
• Hide grief to “take care of others”
• Lose friends, make new friends
• Redefining oneself

SPIRITUAL
• Questions about God:
  • Why would God allow this?
• Questions about the deceased:
  • Where are they now?
  • Are they okay?
  • Can they see me?
  • Will I see them again?
  • What will happen when I die?
• Sensing the deceased’s presence
• Hearing, smelling, or seeing the deceased
• Death affirms or challenges beliefs
• Awe, wonder, mystery
• Continuing relationship with the deceased

BEHAVIORS
• Crying (sometimes unexpectedly)
• Searching for the deceased
• Carrying special objects
• Going to gravesite
• Making and keeping an altar
• Keeping belongings intact
• Looking at photos or videos
• Listening to recordings
• Talking to the deceased
• Avoiding situations that arouse grief
• Changes in daily routine
• “Staying busy”
• Assuming mannerisms of the deceased

EMOTIONAL
• Shock, numbness
• Emptiness
• Sadness
• Sorrow for the one who died
• Loneliness, longing, yearning
• Anger
• Guilt, regret
• Resentment
• “More I should have done”
• Fear, anxiety, insecurity
• Feeling helpless, out of control
• Diminished self-concern
• “Don’t care,” “What does it matter”
• Depression
• Desire to join the deceased
• Suicidal feelings
• Feelings of betrayal, disloyalty
• “Emotional roller coaster”
• Relief

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