



Complicated Grief

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

People with complicated grief don't know what is wrong. They believe their lives have been irreparably damaged by their loss. They can't imagine how they can ever feel better. A person with complicated grief is unable to adapt to their loss. As a result, grief dominates their life with no respite in sight. Relationships with family and friends flounder. Life seems purposeless and health is jeopardized.

Millions of people have complicated grief – meaning that their grief doesn't progress. You're not alone if you've lost someone close and you feel like there is no way forward. The good news is that there's a proven therapy that has helped many people like you. It's short-term and is highly effective in guiding people to adapt in their own way. The therapy lasts 16 weeks and many people tell us that they start to feel noticeably better in just 6 weeks.

What does it feel like when you have complicated grief?

- You're filled with longing and yearning for the person who died
- You think about your loss so much that it's hard to do normal, everyday things that used to be second nature...like taking good care of others, including children, going to work or concentrating at work, cooking, shopping, paying bills, exercising
- You can't shake the feeling of disbelief
- You can't accept what happened; it seems so wrong or unfair
- You feel angry or bitter about the death
- Your life seems empty
- You keep feeling ambushed by strong emotions that you can't control
- You want to avoid people, places and things that remind you that the person you love is gone
- You cry a lot whenever your mind wanders - like driving alone in the car
- You feel like the death just happened even though you know that's not true

What happens to your life?

- You question what happened, over and over, even though you know it won't change anything; you keep imagining how it could have been different
- You feel like you should have been more prepared, like other people wouldn't be struggling as much
- You continue to do things you did before your loved one died even when they don't make sense – like obsessing over how many places to set at the table, keeping their clothes and other possessions ready for them, continuing to make the deceased person's favorite meals; you don't want to do anything differently than when your loved one was alive
- You try to escape from reality by drinking too much alcohol, sleeping during the day, over-eating or not eating enough, ignoring your health.
- You feel distracted, unable to think clearly, unable to organize the day or plan anything at all complex
- You feel like there's nothing to live for; you wish you had died instead of or along with your loved one
- You don't feel comfortable living your life even though you know you should and the person you lost would want you to

Complicated grief affects your relationships with other people

- You want to keep talking about the person who died even though this makes other people uncomfortable
- You feel like other people are uncomfortable with your grief and you have to take care of them
- You feel envious of others that haven't lost someone close
- You want to be a part of things and feeling like it's no longer possible You feel lonely and isolated even when you're with other people
- You're not sure if other people really care; you worry that they're tired of your grief
- You feel like people always let you down and you can't trust them
- You feel like other people want you to get over it and move on

We want you to know

- There's no shame in grief even when it's very strong
- Your love for the person who died is important, and you're important too
- If you're feeling stuck in grief, good therapy is available



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