

Common Reactions in the Grief Process

Physical Changes:

Appetite - loss or increase
Breathing Difficulties –
hyperventilation, shortness of
breath
Chest tightness
Cold hands
Dizziness or fainting spells
Dry mouth
Fatigue
GI upset - constipation,
diarrhea, nausea
Headaches
Hives, rash, itching Indigestion
Insomnia - sleep changes
Low resistance to infection
Minor illnesses
Muscle tightness
Numb or tingling extremities
Pounding or rapid heartbeat
Pale skin or rashes
Sleep too much
Sleep too little
Sighing
Speech slowed, stuttering
Stomach butterflies Sweating
Tearfulness
Trembling
Urinating frequently
Vomiting - dry heaves
Weakness - especially in legs
Weight gain or loss

Flare-Ups of:

Allergies
Arthritis
Asthma
Colitis
Canker sores
Cold sores
Migraines
Illnesses

Emotional or Social Changes:

Ambivalence Agitation
Anger or angry outbursts
Anxiousness
Blaming others
Critical of self
Crying
Depression
Dread
Fear of groups or crowds Fears
in general
Guilt feelings
Helplessness
Hyper excitability Impulsive
behavior Indecisive
Irritability
Isolation
Jealousy
Loneliness
Loss of interest in living
Loss of self-esteem
Moodiness or mood swings
Relief
Restlessness
Sadness
Suspiciousness
Withdrawal from relationships
Worthlessness
Yearning

Behavioral Changes:

Accident proneness
Absent-mindedness
Fingernail biting
Grinding of teeth
Hair twisting
Hyper mobility
Nightmares
Searching or calling out
Treasuring objects of the
deceased

Intellectual Changes:

Concentration difficulties
Confusion
Disbelief
Errors - judging distance,
grammar, pronunciation, use of
numbers
Fantasy life increased or
decreased
Lack of attention to details
Lack of awareness
Loss of creativity
Loss of productivity
Mental blocking
Over-attention to details Past
oriented rather than present or
future Preoccupation with the
deceased
Worrying about everything

Spiritual Changes:

Angry with God
Increased interest in spirituality
Difficulty attending church
Preoccupied with eternal life
Loss of interest in living
Feelings of being punished
Finding peace and strength in
one's faith

