



The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center and
The Robertson Bereavement Center

REACTIONS IN THE NORMAL GRIEF EXPERIENCE

PHYSICAL

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Appetite – loss or increase | Nausea |
| Backaches | Nightmares |
| Breathing difficulties | Numb or tingling extremities |
| Hyperventilation | Pale skin |
| Shallow or shortness of breath | Pounding or rapid heart beat |
| Chest tightness | Shaking |
| Cold hands | Sleeping too much |
| Dizziness or fainting spells | Sighing |
| Dry mouth | Slowed speech |
| Fatigue | Stuttering |
| Gastrointestinal upset | Stomach problems: |
| Constipation | Aches |
| Cramps | Butterflies |
| Diarrhea | Gas |
| Nausea | Ulcer |
| Headaches | Sweating |
| High blood pressure | Tearfulness |
| Hives, rashes, itching | Trembling |
| Indigestion | Urinating frequently |
| Insomnia | Voice – change of pitch |
| Low resistance to infection & minor illness | Weakness – especially in legs |
| Muscle tightness – face, jaws, back of neck, shoulders | Weight gain or loss |

BEHAVIORS

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Absent mindedness | Hyper-mobility (can't be still) |
| Accident proneness | Nightmares |
| Appetite disturbances | Searching and calling out |
| Clumsiness | Teeth grinding |
| Fingernail biting | Treasuring objects of the deceased |
| Hair twisting | Visiting places of the deceased |

FLARE UPS OF:

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Allergies | Hay fever |
| Arthritis | Canker sores |
| Asthma | Cold sores |
| Colitis | Migraines |

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Agitation | Indecisiveness |
| Anger or angry outbursts | Irritability |
| Anxiousness | Jealousy |
| Blaming others | Loneliness |
| Critical of self | Loss of interest in living |
| Crying | Low self-esteem |
| Emancipation | Moodiness or mood swings |
| Depression | Relief |
| Dread | Restlessness |
| Fear of groups or crowds | Sadness |
| Fear in general | Shock |
| Guilt | Suspiciousness |
| Helplessness | Withdrawal from feelings |
| Hopelessness | Worthlessness |
| Hyperexcitability | Yearning |
| Impulse behavior | |

INTELLECTUAL/COGNITIVE

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Concentration difficulties | Lack of attention to details |
| Confusion | Lack of awareness of current events |
| Disbelief | Loss of creativity |
| Errors in: | Loss of productivity |
| Judging distances | Mental blocking |
| Grammar | Over attention to details |
| Pronunciation | Perfectionism |
| Use of numbers | Preoccupation |
| Fantasy life increased or decreased | Sense of loved one's presence |
| Forgetfulness | Worrying |
| Inattention | |

This is only a partial listing of common grief reactions.
There are many additional grief reactions that are not included here.