

REACTIONS TO GRIEF

I. Definitions

- A. Grief - process of experiencing the psychological, social, and physical reactions to the perception of loss. (Rando, 1988).
- B. Mourning - conscious and unconscious processes that:
- a. gradually undo the psychological ties that had bound the mourner to the loved one.
 - b. help the mourner to adapt to the loss.
 - c. help the mourner learn to live healthily in the new world without the deceased. (Rando, 1988).
- Grief is a passive reaction to the loss.
 - Mourning is an active process of working through the loss, integrating the loss into life, and accommodating the change. The mourner makes a shift from a relationship of presence to a relationship of memory.

An acute grief reaction is somewhat time-limited; mourning may take a lifetime.

II. Common psychological, social, and physical characteristics of parental grief response

- A. Psychological effects of grief:
- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fear | Despair |
| Anxiety | Confusion |
| Guilt | Lack of ability to concentrate |
| Sadness/Depression | Decreased self-esteem |
| Vulnerability | Denial/Disbelief |
| Anger | Hearing the baby cry |
| Resentment | Preoccupied with the deceased |
| Dreaming | Loss of control |
| Bitterness | Sense of failure |
| Apathy | Spiritual crisis |
- B. Social effects of grief:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Social withdrawal | Uninterested in usual activities |
| Isolation | Avoidance |