



FUNERAL CHAPEL

Dedicated To Those We Serve

# *Types of Grief*

## **Anticipatory Grief and Mourning**

When a patient or family is expecting a death, it is normal to begin to anticipate how one will react and cope when that person eventually dies. Many family members will try to envision their life without that person and mentally play out possible scenarios which may include grief reactions and ways they will mourn and adjust after the death. Anticipatory grief reactions may include feelings of depression, extreme concern for the dying person, and preparing for the death. Anticipatory grief is a natural process that enables the family more time to slowly get used to the reality of the loss. People are able to complete unfinished business with the dying person (for example, saying “good-bye,” “I love you,” or “I forgive you”). Anticipatory grieving may or may not occur and feelings following the death may be much different from what was anticipated before the death.

## **Sudden Loss Grief**

The grief experienced after a sudden, unexpected death is different from anticipatory grief. Sudden, unexpected loss may overwhelm the coping abilities of a person which may result in the sense of feeling overwhelmed and/or unable to function “normally.” A person may not be able to realize the total impact of their loss. Even though one may be able to acknowledge the loss has occurred, the full impact of this loss may take much longer to fully comprehend than in the case of an expected loss.

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# Complicated Grief

Complicated grief reactions are different from the grief reactions described above. Depressed or anxious mood, disturbed emotions and behavior, major depression substance abuse, and even post-traumatic stress disorder are some of the ways in which grieving can become complicated. Grief becomes complicated when it is masked by significant physical or behavioral symptoms, or when it is exaggerated. If an individual has personality, developmental, or emotional issues, grief therapy may be needed.

If a person suspects they are clinically depressed in addition to their grief they should seek professional assistance. One who avoids any reminders of the person who died, who constantly thinks or dreams about the person who died, and who gets scared and panics easily at any reminders of the person who died may be suffering from post-trauma disorder. In cases such as these, professional assistance may be needed.