

Reactions in the Normal Grief Experience



HOSPICE
OF THE
WESTERN
RESERVE

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss
Bereavement Center and
The Robertson Bereavement Center

PHYSICAL

Appetite – loss or increase
Backaches
Breathing difficulties:
 Hyperventilation
 Shallow or shortness of
 breath
Chest tightness
Cold hands
Dizziness or fainting spells
Dry mouth
Fatigue
GI upset:
 Constipation
 Cramps
 Diarrhea
 Nausea
Headaches

High blood pressure
Hives, rashes, itching
Indigestion
Insomnia
Low resistance to infection
 & minor illness
Muscle tightness – face,
 jaws, back of neck
Nightmares
Numb or tingling
 extremities
Pale skin
Pounding or rapid heart
 beat
Shaking
Sleeping too much
Sighing

Slowed speech
Stuttering
Stomach upset:
 Ache
 Butterflies
 Gas
 Ulcer
Sweating
Tearfulness
Trembling
Urinating frequently
Voice – change of pitch
Weakness – especially in
 legs
Weight gain or loss

BEHAVIORS

Absent mindedness
Accident proneness
Appetite disturbances
Fingernail biting
Hair twisting

Nightmares
Searching and calling out
Teeth grinding
Treasuring objects of the
 deceased

Visiting places of the
 deceased
Un-coordination

FLARE UPS OF:

Allergies
Arthritis
Asthma

Hay fever
Canker sores

Cold sores
Migraines

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL

Agitation
Anger or angry outbursts
Anxiousness
Blaming others
Critical of self
Crying
Emancipation
Depression
Dread
Fear of groups or crowds

Fear in general
Helplessness
Hyperexcitability
Indecisiveness
Irritability
Jealousy
Loneliness
Loss of interest in living
Low self-esteem

Moodiness or mood swings
Relief
Restlessness
Sadness
Suspiciousness
Withdrawal from feelings
Worthlessness
Yearning

INTELLECTUAL/COGNITIVE

Concentration difficulties
Confusion
Disbelief
Errors in:
 Judging distances
 Grammar
 Pronunciation
 Use of numbers

Fantasy life increased or decreased
Forgetfulness
Inattention
Lack of attention to details
Lack of awareness to external events
Loss of creativity
Loss of productivity
Mental blocking

Over attention to details
Perfectionism
Preoccupation
Worrying
Sense of presence feelings that you are still with your loved one who has died