



# Complicated Grief: When Extra Help is Needed

Grief involves a wide range of reactions and it may be hard to tell when it is time to reach out for help. If these reactions become intense, or continue to the point that someone's wellbeing is at risk, professional help may be needed. This is especially true in cases of multiple losses, suicide, homicide or other violent death, and the death of a child.

If you are seeing the signs in yourself or someone you care about, contact a mental health professional for more help.

## **Warning Signs:**

- High risk or self-destructive behavior
- Violent outbursts toward others
- Wishing to die or thinking about suicide
- Flashbacks or recurrent nightmares
- Using alcohol or other drugs to avoid the pain
- Radical changes in values, behavior or lifestyle
- False sense of elation or joy
- Lasting sense of lowered self-worth
- Preoccupation with the loss many months after it occurred
- Difficulty managing the daily tasks of living
- Intense, fresh grief long after the loss (more than 12 months)
- Feelings of guilt about being a survivor
- Avoiding relationships due to fear of losing again
- Constant expectation that something bad is going to happen
- Compulsion to imitate the deceased
- A severe crisis of faith

This material provides a general overview of the topic. Particularly in legal and financial areas, you should consult with your personal advisor. Health information is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a therapist, physician or other health care professional. Contact a health care professional with any questions or concerns about specific health care needs.

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