

# Grief and Loss: The Ongoing Face of Grief and Loss and the Theory Behind It

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The FASD Learning Series is part of the Alberta government's commitment to programs and services for people affected by FASD and those who support them.

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## Session Goals

- Examine views of death and mourning as experienced in a variety of cultures
- Describe physical and behavioral manifestations of grief
  - Discuss how these may be misinterpreted as symptoms of illness if the loss is not recognized
- Examine losses that persons with disabilities and their families, as well as providers, experience
- Discuss the importance of addressing these losses

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## Theory of Loss and Grieving

- Theoretical Basis for Loss and Grieving Through Death
- Theoretical Basis for Addressing Ongoing Losses
  - Physical and Behavioral Manifestations of Grief

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### **Cultures and Loss**

- Attitudes towards life and death
- Expression of pain, suffering and grief
- Acceptance of outside help
- Expectations of family responsibility
- Gender roles

Dubovsky (1997)

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### **Dealing with Death and Dying**

- Denial and isolation
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Kübler-Ross (1969)

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### **Common Responses Associated with Loss**

- Denial
- Guilt
- Grief
- Psychosomatic manifestations
- Reconsideration of life's meanings

Katz and Floria (1986-7)

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**Physical Manifestations of Grief**

- **Hollowness in the stomach**
- **Tightness in the chest and throat**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Oversensitivity to noise**



Adapted From Pickett (1993)

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**Physical Manifestations of Grief**

- **Muscle weakness**
- **Lack of energy**
- **Dry mouth**
- **Hallucinations**
- **Mask-like face**



Adapted From Pickett (1993)

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**Behaviors Associated with Grief**

- **Sleep disturbances**
- **Appetite disturbances**
- **Absent-minded behavior**
- **Social withdrawal**
- **Distressing dreams**



Adapted From Pickett (1993)

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### ***Behaviors Associated with Grief***

- **Sighing**
- **Restlessness**
- **Crying**
- **Anger outbursts**
- **Mood swings**

Adapted From Pickett (1993)

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### ***Losses Experienced by Individuals***

- **Losses Experienced by Individuals with Disabilities**
- **Losses Experienced by Families of Individuals with Disabilities**
- **Losses Experienced by Service Providers**

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### ***Losses Experienced by Families***

- **Hopes and dreams**
- **The enjoyment of birth and infancy**
- **Self-esteem and competence**
- **Balanced family system**
- **Support from family, friends, community**

Dubovsky (1996)

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### Losses Experienced by Families

- **Companionship**
- **Their loved one (placement, suicide, leaving the family)**
- **Faith**
- **Financial security**
- **Privacy**

Dubovsky (1996)

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### Losses Experienced by Families

- **Freedom**
- **Social network**
- **The ability to “kvell”**
- **Security about the future**
- **Control**

Dubovsky (1996)

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### Blame Checklist

Check off all those whom you can blame for the problems you encounter:

|                                     |                        |                                     |                            |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                            |
|                                     | Yourself               |                                     | Infomercials               |
|                                     | Your significant other |                                     | Aliens                     |
|                                     | Genetics               |                                     | The line-up of the planets |
|                                     | “The system”           |                                     | A superior being           |

Dubovsky (1998)

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**Losses Experienced by Persons with Disabilities**

- Hopes and dreams
- Self-esteem and competence
- Balanced family system
- Peer relationships
- Intimate relationships
- Support from others

Dubovsky (1996)

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**Losses Experienced by Persons with Disabilities**

- Their family (through separations)
- Consistent caregivers
- Vocational/educational opportunities
- A role in the family and in society
- Joy and pleasure

Dubovsky (1996)

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**Losses Experienced by Persons with Disabilities**

- Potential/talents
- Companionship
- The ability to be like everyone else
- Freedom
- Security about the future
- Control

Dubovsky (1996)

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### **Losses Experienced by Providers**

- **Hopes and dreams**
- **Self-esteem and competence**
- **Relationships**
- **The ability to “kvell”**
- **Faith**
- **Security about the future**
- **Control**

Dubovsky (1998)

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### **Issues in Grief**

- **Factors That Influence the Response to Loss**
- **Tasks That People Who Are Grieving Experience**

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### **Risk Factors for Prolonged Grief**

- **History of multiple losses**
- **History of incomplete management of grief**
- **Inadequate social supports**
- **Unrecognized or stigmatized loss**
- **Social isolation**

Dubovsky (1998)

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### ***Dimensions in Adjustment to Loss***

#### **Response**

- Intensity of response to loss

#### **Duration**

- Time needed to resolve emotional issues

#### **Effects**

- Degree of disruption to the individual and family system

Adapted from Rosen (1990)

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### ***Tasks That Grieving Persons Need To Perform***

- The family's shared knowledge and acceptance of the reality of the loss
- The family's shared experience of the pain of grief
- Reorganization of the family system
- Redirection of relationships and goals

Adapted from Rosen (1990)

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### ***Helping Individuals Address Loss and Grieving***

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***Providing Help to Individuals and Their Families***

- Really listen
- Be honest
- Raise awareness of experiences of separation and loss
- Acknowledge losses experienced

Dubovsky (1996)

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***Providing Help to Individuals and Their Families***

- Validate losses experienced
- Avoid “good parent/bad parent” issues
- Support confronting losses in a positive manner
- Encourage communication

Dubovsky (1996)

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***Providing Help to Individuals and Their Families***

- Genuinely care
- Be there for support
- Acknowledge your own feelings about loss
- Refer for further treatment when necessary

Dubovsky (1996)

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*“Times of loss offer people the opportunity to:*

- *Deepen emotionally*
- *Grow in maturity*
- *Experience healing*

*- Connect to one another as human beings*

*...Don't let this opportunity go by!”*

Dubovsky 1999

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**Reference**

- Contact Information
- Source Material

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