Dealing with Grief

Pre-reading

Questions: What is grief? How do people express it?
Definitions: Typical – having common characteristics
Anxious – feeling worried, nervous or afraid

Reading

Grief is the normal response to sorrow and confusion that comes from losing someone or something important to you. It is a natural part of life. Grief is a typical reaction to death, divorce, job loss, a move away from family or friends, or loss of good health due to illness.

Just after a death or loss, you may feel empty and numb, as if you are in shock. You may notice physical changes such as trembling, nausea, dry mouth, and muscle weakness. Those in grief often have trouble sleeping and eating.

You may become angry – at a situation, a person, or just angry in general. Almost everyone in grief also experiences guilt. Guilt is often expressed as “I could have, I should have, and I wish I would have” statements.

Grieving people may have strange dreams or nightmares. They may be absent-minded, withdraw socially, or lack the desire to return to work. While these feelings and behaviors are normal during grief, they will pass.

Every person who experiences a death or other loss must complete a four-step grieving process. First, accept the loss. Second, work through and feel the physical and emotional pain of grief. Third, adjust to living in a world without the person or item lost. Fourth, move on with life. The grieving process is over only when a person completes the four steps.

So how does grief differ from depression? Depression is more than a feeling of grief.

Clinical depression is a whole body disorder. It can take over the way you think and feel.

Symptoms of depression include: changes in sleep patterns; feeling worthless or helpless; low energy or fatigue; thoughts of death or suicide; weight loss or weight gain; loss of interest in what you used to enjoy; and, trouble concentrating or remembering.

If you recently experienced a death or other loss, these feelings may be a part of a normal grief reaction. But, if these feelings persist with no lifting mood, ask for help. Talk with a friend, a teacher or a co-worker. Call your doctor and tell him or her how you are feeling.
Understanding

1. How are depression and grief similar? _______________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

2. How are depression and grief different? ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

3. What is grief? _________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

4. When might a person experience grief? _________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

5. Is the grieving process ever over? If so, when? __________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

6. What type of behavior changes may occur in those who are grieving? (List at least three.) ______
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

7. What does the word persist mean? _______________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: What type of grief have you experienced? How did it affect you?

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Dealing with Grief – Level 5.5