

Is It Grief Or Is It Depression?

When a person experiences a loss of someone or something that is meaningful to them, it is absolutely normal, and expected, that the person will develop grief around their loss. Grief is a natural human reaction and most people will go through this process multiple times throughout their lives.

While grief can cause depressive symptoms, there *is* a difference between grief induced feelings of depression and an actual clinical depression. Grief affects each of us differently and the timeline for experiencing the emotions that go along with the grieving process differ from person to person. When grief takes over an individual's life, they may begin to feel hopeless, helpless and worthless. These are indicators that it may be necessary for someone to seek professional assistance.

The Differences Between Grief and Depression

Grief and depression have several symptoms in common including sadness, insomnia, poor appetite and weight loss. And, it can be confusing for both the person experiencing these symptoms and those individuals in the person's personal and professional support system to differentiate between the two. The main area to observe when differentiating between grief and depression is duration and intensity. Grief lessens and will pass with time, while major depression may not. Grief becomes problematic when the individual experiencing the emotions associated with their loss does not experience movement in the process. Feeling "stuck" in grief may be an indicator that grief has turned into depression.

Grief may be experienced in the event of the following:

- Death of a family member, friend, or pet
- Divorce
- Children moving out of the home
- Ending of a relationship
- Life changes such as job loss or relocation
- Health issues

Grief may be experienced in the event of any type of loss. The grief process varies in intensity and duration from person to person. There are no hard and fast rules around the experience of grief.

Recognizing the Signs of Depression

It is important to be aware of the potential signs of clinical depression. Clinical depression is a medical illness with both mental and physical symptoms.

Signs of depression may include:

- Pervasive sadness
- Loss of interest in things that one used to find enjoyable
- Changes in appetite
- Sleep disturbances
- Inability to perform normal daily tasks of living
- Feelings of guilt
- Low self esteem or confidence in self
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness

Sometimes a major depression can develop along with the reactive depression associated with grief. Major depression is a serious health issue and requires professional attention.

[Help For Depression is Only a Phone Call Away](#)

There are many resources available to individuals who are dealing with grief and/or depression. If you are concerned that you may be dealing with one or both of these issues or know someone who is, don't be afraid to approach these people or to reach out for help. There are many organizations that understand the nature of grief and depression. Aurora Behavioral Health System is one of those entities. We are here to help and are standing by to take your call.

[Aurora Behavioral Health System: Help, From Start to Finish](#)

Aurora offers professional behavioral health services to assist you in working through your grief and depression. Our services are designed to meet your needs at all different levels of care. Not only do we provide in-patient acute care services, but we also offer day treatment programs and outpatient therapy groups. Aurora also specializes in working with individuals who are dealing with other issues such as anxiety and chemical dependency. Our Patient Services department provides 24/7 free, confidential assessments to help determine your needs and support you in making the appropriate program choice to help you begin your road to recovery.

Where healing starts and the road to recovery begins...

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