GRIEF: When did it get so complicated.. And what practitioners need to know about it

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14,800
So if we are hard wired to attach, how do we manage the death of an attachment figure?

Excellent question, so glad you asked.....
Resilience/The psychological immune process

We don’t “get over grief”. BUT we are hard-wired to heal from emotional hurts, just as we heal from physical injury.

We build a narrative that we can integrate into our lives
Before diagnosis and intervention comes recognition

- Complicated grief
- Prolonged grief
- Traumatic Grief
- Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder
- Disordered Grief
Complicated grief is a thing

Number of people in Ireland who may develop CG each year = Number of people who:
• Have a stroke
• Are diagnosed with skin cancer or
• Die of heart disease.....

Fully seated
3 arena

(Approx 9,500)

28,000 x 5 ÷ 7 = 9,800
ICD-11 Guidelines

• The grief response has persisted for an abnormally long time exceeding expected social, cultural and religious norms.

• The disturbance causes significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other areas. If functioning is maintained ONLY through significant additional effort, or is much less than previous functioning level, that is also considered impairment.
ICD-11 Guidelines

A persistent and pervasive grief response characterized by longing or persistent preoccupation with the deceased accompanied by intense emotional pain, blame difficulty accepting the death, feeling like one has lost part of oneself, inability to experience positive mood, emotional numbness, difficulty engaging with social and other activities.
GRIEF AND DEPRESSION ARE NOT THE SAME THING

MDD
- Pervasive loss of interest or pleasure
- Pervasive dysphoric mood across situations
- Preoccupation with low self esteem; general sense of guilt or shame

CG
- Loss of interest or pleasure related to missing loved one
- Pangs of emotion triggered by reminders of loss
- Preoccupation with the deceased; guilt and self blame focused on death
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<th>Normative grief after 6 months</th>
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<td>Sadness</td>
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<td>Anxiety/anger/guilt</td>
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<td>Difficulty engaging in life</td>
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<td>Heightened reactivity</td>
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<td>Intrusive thoughts</td>
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<td>Rumination</td>
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<td>Sleep disturbance</td>
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<td>Somatic symptoms</td>
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Used with permission, see Shear, Muldberg & Periyakoil reference.
Complicated Grief treatment: What is happening internationally?

Australia: Bryant et al
Germany: Rosner et al
Netherlands: Boelen et al
Sweden: Wagner et al
Irish Vision

A centre of excellence where:

• Professionals are trained, supervised & mentored in using the Shear CGT model
• CG/CGT research is conducted
• Increased capacity to recognise, diagnose & treat CG throughout Ireland
• People with complicated grief can receive specialised, evidence-based treatment delivered by experienced practitioners
• International ties are maintained through collaboration & information sharing
CG/CGT training & service provision

CGT on-line group of practitioners in Ireland, England, US and Canada

400 practitioners have received one day training in CG.

190 practitioners trained in using the CGT protocol

Publicly available list of 30 CGT practitioners in Ireland
Pyramid Of Bereavement Care

Level 1: Information & Support
Level 2: Extra Support
Level 3: Prof Therapy

Pyramid Levels

Level 1
Level 2
Level 3

Prof Therapy
Extra Support
Information & Support
Where to from here?

• Increased awareness of CG and the existence of evidence-based treatment, targeting GPs and voluntary bereavement groups
• Encourage movement up AND down the bereavement pyramid
• Core practitioner competencies at each level of the pyramid
• Accessible list of practitioners who can recognise, diagnose and treat CG
• Extraction and sharing of transferable aspects of CGT for general bereavement counselling
Complicated Grief


TEDX  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GDTbtePHUU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GDTbtePHUU)
Acknowledgements

The “Balls and Jars” concept has been used by Jerusha McCormick and Barbara Monroe and was informed by the work of Tonkin:
Tonkin, L (1996): Growing around grief—another way of looking at grief and recovery, Bereavement Care, 15:1

Complicated grief concepts and treatment were informed by the work of Prof Kathy Shear, Center for Complicated grief, Columbia University, NY. www.complicatedgrief.org
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