



Appendix I: Distinguishing Grief and Depression

Feeling	Grief	Depression
Mood states	• Greater range of moods and feelings • Quick shifts from sadness to normal state in the same day • Variability in mood, activity, communication, appetite, and sexual interest in the same week	• Moods and feelings are more static, little variability • Consistent sense of depletion, psychomotor retardation, anorexia, and/or decreased sexual interest or compulsive communication, eating, and/or sexual behavior
Expression of anger	• Open, externally directed	• Absence of externally directed anger, internally directed
Expression of sadness	• Weeping	• Difficulty weeping or controlling weeping
Self-concept	• Guilt associated with specific aspects of the loss • Experience the world as empty • Preoccupation with the loss	• The loss confirms the person is bad or worthless • Focus on punitive thoughts, guilt has global aspect • Preoccupation with self
Responsiveness	• Periodic • Want solitude but respond to warmth and involvement	• Static • Fear of being alone or unresponsiveness to others
Pleasure	• Periodic • Want solitude but respond to warmth and involvement	• Restrict all pleasure • Loss of sense of humour
Reaction to others	• Others want to offer support	• Others often feel irritated • Rarely feel like reaching out

Content adapted from the Victoria Hospice Society.