

APPENDIX T: COMMON REACTIONS TO GRIEF AND LOSS

There is a multitude of different sources of grief and loss and not all involve death. Individuals experiencing grief from a loss may choose a variety of ways of expressing it. No two people will respond to the same loss in the same way. However, some frequent reactions include:

Changed behaviours:

- Seeking solitude, withdrawal
- Change in social activities
- Inappropriate behaviour (e.g., laughing)
- Absent mindedness
- Crying

Sleep and energy disturbances:

- Feeling fatigued, restless, lethargic
- Sleep difficulties

Other physical symptoms:

- Changed eating habits
- Gastro-intestinal complaints
- Decreased interest in pleasurable activities
- Decreased sex drive

A range of troubling emotions:



- Feelings of denial, disbelief, numbness, shock, panic, or sadness
- Feelings of isolation
- Mood fluctuations
- Anger, guilt, frustration, hostility, blaming

Cognitive difficulties such as forgetfulness, confusion or a lack of concentration

Spiritual emptiness and pessimism

Constant thought about the deceased or a feeling of their presence



Although these reactions can be overwhelming and distressing it is important to accept and not to avoid them. It is also useful to remember your reactions are common and natural and you are not alone.