

STAGES OF GRIEF IN CHRONIC PAIN

HANDOUT INSTRUCTIONS

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The losses experienced by chronic pain sufferers are important to understand when working with clients. In order for healing to occur, clients need to understand what they are experiencing. I have incorporated the first five stages from Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's model, *On Death & Dying*, and added a sixth step. These stages are also experienced by family members, and, as a clinician, you must realize that the families are mourning for the person with chronic pain even though they are still alive.

Remember that this is a guide and not everyone goes through all the stages in a linear process. There are many grief models that explain the process of grief differently. The most important information to convey to the client is that chronic pain contributes to multiple losses for the client and family and that the emotional responses to these losses can include many different feelings. The resolution of grief involves a process of healing over time.

Please see the article, "The Chronic Pain Support Group Process," in Section 8, page 218, for an explanation of the grief stages.

Notes:

STAGES OF GRIEF IN CHRONIC PAIN

Denial/Shock/Isolation

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance—Coming to Terms

Change/Reinventing/Recreating One's Self—Rebirth

First five stages adopted from Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death & Dying*, Simon & Schuster/Touchstone, 1969.