

## Annex: Supplemental Information on Complicated Grief

Research shows that approximately 20% of people who experience loss are unable to move on with their lives on their own. About half of those 20% develop serious mental illness, most often Complicated Grief or Major Depression. Complicated grief is a severe and more intense form of grief that disrupts a person's day-to-day activities (The Center for Complicated Grief at Columbia University, [www.complicatedgrief.columbia.edu](http://www.complicatedgrief.columbia.edu)). Factors such as experiencing an unexpected loss of someone with whom the patient had a very strong relationship; when there is not enough social support, as well as having pre-existing mental illness puts them at risk for developing these mental health disorders. See below for more detailed information about risk factors. Other names for complicated grief are *Prolonged Grief Disorder* (ICD-11) and *Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder* (DSM-V).

### Target population

Because each person's grief experience is unique, the amount of time before someone is ready deal with it is variable and may be more than six months and as long as a year. The 20% of people who are unable to cope well on their own six months and or even a year after a loss are good candidates for this intervention. This intervention is not only a way to reduce the risk of developing serious mental health problems like Complicated Grief but also as a way for them to reduce the distress of grief in general.

Most research agrees that there are a number of factors that increase the chances of developing complicated grief. These include but are not limited to:

- Older women whose spouse has died.
- Those for whom a long time has passed since the loss and who continue to experience a high level of distress.
- Parents whose child died.
- Children whose parents died.

Other risk factors for complicated grief include the following:

- When the loss is from an unexpected or violent death such as death from a car accident; or the murder or suicide of a loved one.
- When there are multiple losses over a short period of time.
- When there was a dependent relationship to the deceased person.
- Someone who is socially isolated or who has lost their support system or friendships.
- When someone had traumatic childhood experiences, such as abuse or neglect.
- When someone has other major life stressors, such as major financial hardships.

### Resources that can Assist in Identifying Complicated Grief

Please refer to the following articles that provide more information about a questionnaire "The Prolonged Grief Scale-13" (PG-13) that can assist facilitators and their clinical supervisors in identifying Complicated Grief in MHLA patients. Another reference listed below lists the

features of Prolonged Grief Disorder to assist in determining if a patient has symptoms of (or a diagnosis of) Prolonged Grief Disorder and therefore requires a higher level of care:

1. Litz, B. T., Schorr, Y., Delaney, E., Au, T., Papa, A., Fox, A. B., & Prigerson, H. G. (2014). A randomized controlled trial of an internet-based therapist-assisted indicated preventive intervention for prolonged grief disorder. *Behaviour research and therapy*, *61*, 23-34.
2. Mauro, C., Reynolds III, C. F., Maercker, A., Skritskaya, N., Simon, N., Zisook, S., ... & Shear, M. K. (2019). Prolonged grief disorder: clinical utility of ICD-11 diagnostic guidelines. *Psychological Medicine*, *49*(5), 861-867.
3. Pohlkamp, L., Kreicbergs, U., Prigerson, H. G., & Sveen, J. (2018). Psychometric properties of the Prolonged Grief Disorder-13 (PG-13) in bereaved Swedish parents. *Psychiatry research*, *267*, 560-565:
4. Prigerson, H. G., & Maciejewski, P. K. (2006). Prolonged grief disorder (PG-13). *Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: Boston, MA*. Chicago