

Do you/have you experienced the following?

- The death of a person close to you *at least* 12 months ago
- One or both of the following most days since the death, especially recently:
 - an intense yearning or longing for the deceased person
 - preoccupation with thoughts or memories of the deceased
- Three or more of the following most days since the death, especially recently:
 - identity disruption/feeling that part of yourself has died
 - disbelief about the death
 - avoidance of reminders that the person is dead
 - intense emotional pain related to the death
 - difficulty reintegrating into other relationships and activities following the death
 - emotional numbness
 - feeling that life is meaningless as a result of the death
 - intense loneliness as a result of the death.



“a persistent pervasive grief response that continues to cause clinically significant distress or impairment for *more than 12 months* after the death of someone close” –DSMV-TR

Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) in Adults



What is PDG?

How is it assessed for diagnosis?

What helps?

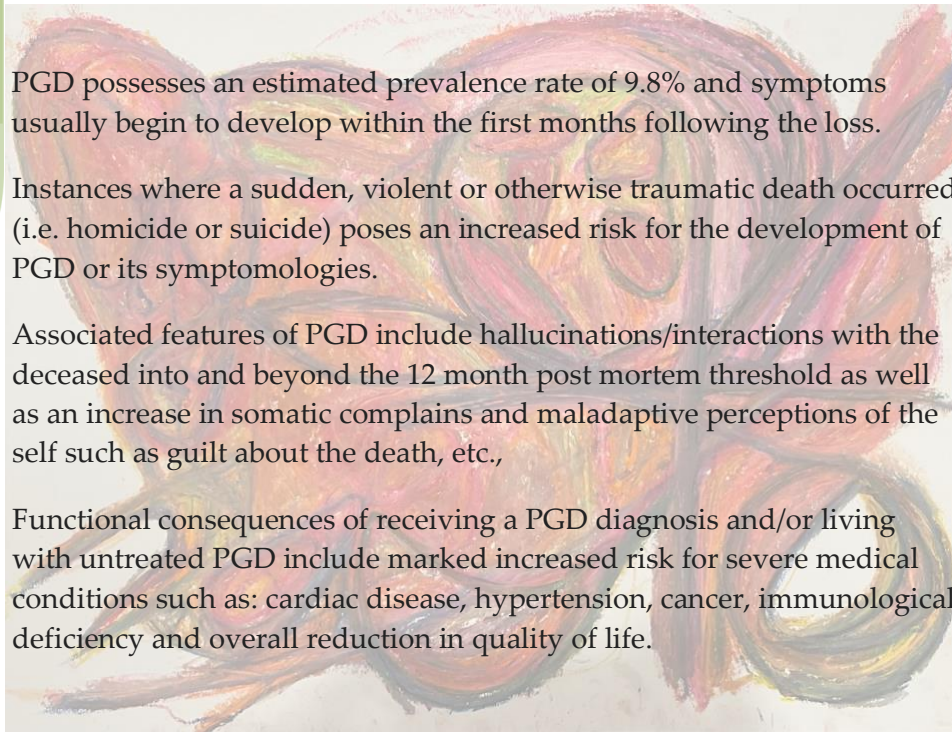
What else do I need to know?

PGD possesses an estimated prevalence rate of 9.8% and symptoms usually begin to develop within the first months following the loss.

Instances where a sudden, violent or otherwise traumatic death occurred (i.e. homicide or suicide) poses an increased risk for the development of PGD or its symptomologies.

Associated features of PGD include hallucinations/interactions with the deceased into and beyond the 12 month post mortem threshold as well as an increase in somatic complaints and maladaptive perceptions of the self such as guilt about the death, etc.,

Functional consequences of receiving a PGD diagnosis and/or living with untreated PGD include marked increased risk for severe medical conditions such as: cardiac disease, hypertension, cancer, immunological deficiency and overall reduction in quality of life.



Assessments & Diagnosis

Currently, the most widely used and accepted means of assessment and measurement of PDG is what is known as the PG-13-R which is a 13-item questionnaire style assessment which measures intensity of PGD symptoms on a scale of intensity from not experiencing the symptom at all to having the experience to an overwhelming degree.

A PGD diagnosis is made based on the overall score.

Interventions

The following are interventions proposed by the American Psychiatric Association:

- Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) - provides tools to cultivate acceptance & a sense of fulfillment after loss
- Bereavement support groups – offers community & sense of relief from intense loneliness and isolation as a result of the condition

Recovery & The Arts

The Expressive Arts provide immense help and hope during a time that may feel bereft of each, particularly in their capacity to help process often dynamic and conflicting emotional states regarding loss in a way that may eventually offer a sense of acceptance & meaning-making.

Expressive Arts that may improve & even alleviate symptoms of PGD include: music therapy which utilizes listening, song writing and playing, playing rhythmic instruments, writing therapy including poetry, journaling and narrative writing, horticultural therapy, performance art, painting and sculpture.

