

Table 24.2 Diagnostic Differences Between Uncomplicated Grief and Clinical Depression

Clinical Sign	Uncomplicated Grief	Clinical Depression
Onset	Death of loved one	May or may not have an identifiable psychosocial precipitant
Predominant affect	Feelings of emptiness Sense of loss	Depressed mood Inability to anticipate happiness or pleasure
Course of dysphoria	Wave-like, decreases over time	Persistent, nonspecific
Capacity for humor or positive emotions	Yes	No
Thought content	Preoccupation with deceased	Self-critical Pessimistic Ruminative
Self-esteem	Preserved Sense of failure specific to relationship with deceased	Generalized worthlessness; self-loathing
Thoughts of dying or death	Focus on deceased Anticipate reunion	Ending own life due to feeling worthless, undeserving, or intolerable psychic pain

SOURCE: Adapted from American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.