

CRISTINA MARIA SPERANZA, MEDINA BORDEA, *Bereavement in Children and Adolescents*

**Abstract:** Grief is described as the normal process of reacting to a loss, which can be experienced physically (e.g., the death of a loved one), socially (e.g., through divorce), occupationally (e.g., losing a job), or materially (e.g., a change in financial status). Emotional reactions can include anger, anguish, anxiety, despair, guilt, and sadness; in fact, there is no emotion (or lack of emotion) that cannot be considered part of 'normal' grief. Physical reactions can include changes in appetite, illness, physical problems, or sleeping problems. Children's experience of grief varies depending on the type of loss and the developmental stage of the child. Moving to a new town may precipitate a grief response that is mild and transient, while grief from loss of a parent threatens the foundation of the child's world. Young children express grief in vastly different ways from teens and adults. A child's grief is complicated because it is linear, circular, and developmental. Grieving children describe grief symptoms similar to those of adults, with the expression of their grief being influenced by their age, verbal and cognitive abilities, and their understanding of death. Cognitive-behavioural interventions with bereaved children and their parents have been shown to effect significant improvements in depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress symptoms and reduction in symptoms of complicated grief, reducing children's symptoms of trauma has been shown to reduce also their grief-related distress, though additional bereavement-focused work can be useful when distress continues.

**Keywords:** death, bereavement, children, grief.