

Some Differences Between Grief and Trauma

Grief	Trauma
Generalized reaction = SADNESS	Generalized reaction = TERROR
Grief reactions stand alone.	Trauma reactions generally include grief reactions.
Grief reactions are generally known to the public and the professional.	Trauma reactions, especially in children are largely unknown to the public and often the professionals.
In grief, most can generally talk about what happened.	In trauma, most do not want to talk about what happened.
In grief, pain is an acknowledgement of the loss.	In trauma, pain triggers tremendous terror and an overwhelming sense of powerlessness and loss of safety.
In grief, anger is generally non-destructive and non-assaultive.	In trauma, anger often becomes assaultive even after non-violent trauma.
Grief generally does not attack nor "disfigure" our self-image.	Trauma generally attacks, distorts and "disfigures" our self-image.
In grief, guilt says, "I wish I would/would not have..."	Trauma guilt says, "It was my fault. I could have prevented it."
In grief, dreams tend to be of the deceased.	In trauma, dreams are about the self as potential victim.
Grief generally does not involve trauma reactions like flashbacks, startle reactions, hypervigilance, numbing, etc.	Trauma involves grief reactions in addition to trauma specific reactions described.