

*Clarifying and scaling grief*

Without attachment, there can be no grief. Grief is the end stage of the attachment process. Its intensity is usually proportional to the level of attachment. Grief can be overwhelming. Grief can be delayed and repressed. Grief can be confusing and associated with a host of secondary emotions that complicate it. The Dashometrics Grief Spectrum-1 is meant to help assess all of these issues related to grief.

- ▶ Item 1: This item is meant to assess the threshold concept of whether the respondent really understands what grief is.
- ▶ Item 2: This item is meant to both reinforce a definition of grief and assess whether the respondent is experiencing grief.
- ▶ Item 3: This item seeks to scale the level or intensity of the client's grief.
- ▶ Item 4: This item seeks to assess whether the respondent experiences "undifferentiated" grief. This means the respondent experiences a real sense of grief, but is not able to identify the origin of it.
- ▶ Items 5 and 6: These two items together seek to identify whether the client experiences "complex" grief (grief associated with related emotions such as anger, anxiety, confusion, depression or guilt) and whether they would like to do something about it. This is also a cuing question for providers to address these secondary emotions as we presume most respondents will want to therapeutically deal with these other emotions.
- ▶ Item 7: This item is meant to identify whether the respondent experiences "ambiguous" grief where the state of loss is uncertain. Examples might include missing persons where their status is uncertain. Another example is when a respondent is dealing with an attachment figure that has dementia and the gradual loss of self and recognition of others that can go along with that.
- ▶ Item 8: This item suggests the respondent knows what grief is, knows where it comes from, but does not understand how to deal with or process their grief.
- ▶ Items 9 and 10: These items take Item 8 even further. Here the respondent has an awareness of what to do about grief, but they are too overwhelmed or blocked to process their grief.
- ▶ Item 11: This item is meant both to assess a respondent's difficulty in sharing their grief experience and at the same time to suggest the solution of doing so. It suggests exploring why respondent is reluctant to share their grief and working on overcoming these barriers.
- ▶ Item 12: An affirmative response on this item suggests that helping respondent establish appropriate social support would help them process their grief.
- ▶ Item 13: This is another assessment and solution-suggestive item meant to cue respondent and/or provider to use "pendulation" strategies, in which respondent processes grief in "bites" and then uses intentional "withdrawal" strategies to distance themselves from their grief emotions. This cycle can be repeated over and over until grief recovery is complete.
- ▶ Item 14: This item is a general question to determine respondent's state of readiness to process their grief. Because the timing for taking such a task on is individual to each client, this item allows respondent to establish whether or not they want to proceed with grief resolution work.