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Prolonged Grief Disorder – Devised for the ICD-11 by the World Mental Health Organization

For more than two decades, practitioners and scientists worldwide have expressed the need for a clinical diagnosis covering pathological or complicated cases of bereavement and grief. A few key clinical groups from around the world have provided evidence for a distinct clinical picture or syndrome of grief with widely recognized studies on its psychopathology, assessment or treatment. Research on this condition continues with remarkable research currently being conducted in parts of the world like Asia, Africa or Southern Europe. In the context of the revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), the working group on disorders specifically associated with stress at World Health Organization (WHO) developed a new definition and concept of a 'Prolonged Grief Disorder' (Maercker et al., 2013). I will present this definition in detail, its development and the studies that were conducted to establish its clinical usefulness, reliability, and validity. Thus, for the first time in medicine, psychology, social work and thanatology, people who are in need of support will receive specific interventions to regain their mental health after bereavement, and will be recognised by the classification of (mental) disorders. My presentation will lead into the cross-cultural and therapeutic implications of the new diagnoses—which will be officialized in 2018.

Literature:

Maercker, A., Brewin, C. R., Bryant, R. A., Cloitre, M., Ommeren, M., Jones, L. M., ... & Reed, G. M. (2013). Diagnosis and classification of disorders specifically associated with stress: proposals for ICD-11. *World Psychiatry*, 12(3), 198-206.



Andreas Maercker, PhD, MD, completed his medical and psychological education in Halle/Saale and Berlin in former East Germany. He received his PhD on at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. In 1999, he became Professor of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy at the University of Technology in Dresden, where he directed the Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) research and treatment center. In 2005 he was appointed as chair and full professor of Psychopathology and Clinical Intervention at the University of Zurich. Professor Maercker is or has been principal and co-investigator in numerous national and

international studies in traumatic stress research, clinical gerontopsychology, electronic mental health and cultural clinical psychology and has published more than 200 peer review articles. He authored or edited 14 scientific or therapeutic books. He served on Board of the Directors in the national, European, and International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Since 2011 Dr. Maercker is chair of the working group "Disorders specifically associated with stress" at WHO's ICD-11 development. From 2016 he directs a three-year WHO project on "Development of an e-Mental Health intervention for people suffering from depression or anxieties in low and middle income countries".

Keywords characterizing the expertise: PTSD, stress-response syndromes, lifespan developmental psychopathology, treatment, e-mental health, cross-cultural clinical psychology.