

STRUCTURED CLINICAL INTERVIEW FOR PROLONGED GRIEF DISORDER (SCIP)

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INSTRUCTIONS

Standard administration of the Structured Clinical Interview for Prolonged Grief Disorder (SCIP) is needed to ensure reliable and valid scoring and diagnosis. The SCIP should be administered by interviewers who have received training in structured clinical interviewing and instruction in how to make a differential diagnosis of mental illness in the context of bereavement. This would include a thorough understanding of the conceptual basis of Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) and its various symptoms, and detailed knowledge of the features and conventions of the SCIP itself.

Administration

1. Identify an index loss to serve as the basis for symptom inquiry. The index loss must involve the death of a significant other.
2. Read prompts verbatim, one at a time, in the order presented, except:
 - a. Use the respondent's own words for labeling the loss.
3. In general, do not suggest responses. If a respondent has difficulty understanding a prompt, it may be necessary to offer a brief example to clarify and illustrate. However, this should be done rarely and only after the respondent has been given ample opportunity to answer spontaneously.
4. Move through the interview as efficiently as possible to minimize respondent burden. Some useful strategies:
 - a. Be thoroughly familiar with the SCIP so that prompts flow smoothly.
 - b. Ask the fewest number of prompts needed to obtain sufficient information to support a valid rating.
 - c. Minimize note-taking and write while the respondent is talking to avoid long pauses.
 - d. Take charge of the interview. Be respectful but firm in keeping the respondent on task, transitioning between questions, pressing for examples, or pointing out contradictions.

Interviewer Scoring

To align with DSM-5-TR criteria for prolonged grief disorder, the SCIP assesses the frequency and intensity of symptoms, as well as the extent of functional impairment due to these symptoms. To receive a positive diagnosis of Prolonged Grief Disorder, the following is required:

Criterion A: The indexed loss must have occurred 12 months prior to the interview for adults, or 6 months prior for children and adolescents (reported in item A3)

Criterion B: The respondent must report symptoms of yearning and preoccupation about the deceased at a clinically significant degree and frequency. This criterion is met by responses of “quite a bit” or “overwhelmingly” to items B1 and B2, indexing clinical significance, and responses of “nearly every day” or “several times a day” for items B1a and B2a, indexing frequency of symptoms.

Criterion C: At least three out of the eight listed symptoms in this criterion must be reported at the same or greater level of clinical intensity and frequency as in Criterion B. This is satisfied by responses of “quite a bit” or “overwhelmingly” for the severity items and “nearly every day” or “several times a day” for the frequency items for at least three of the same symptoms (i.e. C1 and C1a, C2 and C2a, C3 and C3a).

Criterion D: The disturbance resulting from the grief reaction must cause substantial distress or impairment in functioning. This criterion is met by at least one out of the four items (D1 through D4) being rated by the interviewer as “moderate impact” or “severe impact.”

Criterion E: The grief reaction must exceed cultural norms for the interviewee, both in terms of duration (item E4) and severity (item E5). These items are rated by the interviewer with substantial input from the interviewee, who is the expert on their own cultural context. Grief reactions may vary widely between cultures; in discussing these items, both cultural competency and cultural humility are needed to ensure proper administration and evaluation.

Criterion F: Based on rater evaluation, the symptoms reported by the interviewee are not better explained by another mental disorder, such as major depressive disorder or posttraumatic stress disorder, medical condition, or physiological effects of a substance. The SCIP does not assess for presence of these factors. Rather, they must independently be ruled out by the interviewer. An evaluation of “no” in item F1 is required for a diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder.

Global Ratings: Overall validity of responses must be evaluated by the interviewer must be evaluated as “excellent” “good”, or “fair”.

For each section of the SCIP, responses necessary to establish a diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder are colored in grey.

Criterion A: Exposure to loss of a significant other

I'm going to ask you about your experience of (insert their recent significant loss, referred to as the index loss). I'll ask you to describe the loss (e.g., who died and the deceased's kinship and emotional relationship to you). In addition, I'll ask you how the loss occurred, when it occurred and your emotional response to this loss. If there were multiple losses that you have experienced recently, please tell me the loss that has affected you the most emotionally. In general, I do not need a lot of information – just enough so that I can understand any problems that you may have had. Please let me know if you find yourself becoming upset as we go through the questions so we can slow down and talk about it. Also, let me know if you have any questions or if you don't understand something. Do you have any questions before we start?

In relation to (index loss) I'd like to begin by asking you to briefly describe what happened.

A1. Who was the person that you lost and what was that person's relationship to you (e.g., both with respect to kinship and emotional closeness)?

A2. Can you describe how the loss occurred (events surrounding the loss)?

A3. When did the loss occur? (Date, or if participant does not recall, month or time of year)

If the respondent reports that the death occurred from something other than natural causes (e.g., accident, natural or manmade disaster, homicide, suicide), then the following unscored items may be asked to gain more context about the indexed loss.

- Were you present when it occurred?
- Was anyone else seriously injured or killed?
- Was your own life at risk or threatened?
- Do you feel that you or someone else could have prevented the death?

The unscored items below may be used to assess potential prior history of prolonged grief disorder. These questions may be repeated in instances where the interviewee reports multiple other deaths.

- Have you experienced any additional deaths of people close to you in the past, other than _____?
 - *If yes, when did it occur?*
 - *If yes, did your reaction to the death of that person cause problems for you?*
 - *If yes, did your reaction to the death prevent you from doing things that you wanted to do?*
 - *If yes, did your reaction to the death last for longer than you were expecting?*

Criterion B: Separation distress: The bereaved person experiences yearning or preoccupation with the loss at least daily and at a clinically significant degree

For the remainder of the interview, please keep (the index loss) in mind as I ask you about different reactions it may have evoked for you. You may have experienced some of these thoughts, feelings, and behaviors before the death of _____, but for this interview we're going to focus just on the past month. For each reaction, I'll ask if you've had it in the past month, and if so, how often and how much it bothered you.

B1. Do you feel yourself longing or yearning for _____?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly
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If Item B1 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" B1a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day
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B2. Have you felt preoccupied with thoughts or memories of _____?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly
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If Item B2 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" B2a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day
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Criterion C: Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral symptoms: The bereaved person must have three (or more) of the following symptoms experienced at least daily or to a disabling degree:

C1. Since the death, or as a result of the death, do you feel confused about your role in life or feel like you don't know who you are any more (i.e., feeling like a part of you has died)?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly
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If Item C1 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C1a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day
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C2. Do you have trouble believing that _____ is really gone?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly
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If Item C2 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C2a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day
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C3. Do you avoid reminders that _____ is really gone?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly
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If Item C3 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C3a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day
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C4. Do you feel emotional pain (e.g., anger, bitterness, sorrow) related to losing _____?

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly
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If Item C4 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C4a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day	
C5. Since losing _____, or as a result of it, do you feel that you have trouble re-engaging in life (e.g., problems engaging with friends, pursuing interests, planning for the future)?				
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly

If Item C5 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C5a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day	
C6. Since losing _____, or as a result of it, do you feel emotionally numb or detached from others?				
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly

If Item C6 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C6a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day	
C7. Do you feel that life is meaningless without _____?				
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly

If Item C7 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C7a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day	
C8. Do you feel alone or lonely without _____?				
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Overwhelmingly

If Item C8 = "Quite a bit" or "Overwhelmingly" C8a. How frequently have you experienced this?

At least once in the past month	At least once a week	Nearly every day	Several times a day
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Criterion D: Clinically significant distress or functional impairment

The following items are asked as open-ended questions and scored by the interviewer to reflect the most appropriate category.

Significant distress

D1. Overall, in the past month, how distressed have you felt as a result of your loss?

No adverse impact	Mild impact, minimal distress	Moderate impact, distress clearly present and significant but not incapacitating	Severe impact, considerable distress, incapacitating
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Social functioning – consider impairment in social functioning reported on in earlier items

D2. Overall, in the past month, has your loss affected your relationships with other people?
How so?
Would you say you felt socially isolated before the death?
If yes: Was there a marked change in your feelings of social isolation following the death?

No adverse impact	Mild impact, minimal impairment in social functioning	Moderate impact, distress clearly present and significant but not incapacitating	Severe impact, considerable distress, socially incapacitated
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Occupational functioning - Consider reported work history, including number and duration of jobs, as well as the quality of work relationships. If premorbid functioning is unclear, inquire about work experiences before the loss.

D3. *If unclear:* Are you working now?
If yes: Overall, in the past month, has your loss affected your work or your ability to work?

No adverse impact	Mild impact, minimal impairment in occupational functioning	Moderate impact, definite impairment but not severe occupational dysfunction	Severe impact, marked impairment, unable to work
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Other functioning

D4. Overall, in the past month, do you have trouble doing any other things you normally do because of your loss?

No adverse impact	Mild impact, minimal impairment in other important areas of functioning	Moderate impact, definite impairment but not severe dysfunction in other important areas of functioning	Severe impact, marked impairment, few if any aspects of functioning still intact in specified areas
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Criterion E: Severity and duration of grief exceeds social/cultural/religious norms

Next, I would like to ask you some questions about your culture. I'd like to ask these questions to better understand how the way you've been feeling relates to how people like your friends and family may expect you to feel or behave.

E1. Do you feel connected to any social groups, ethnic groups, or traditions? How would you describe your culture? Do you have multiple cultures that you feel that you are part of?

E2. How do people in your culture(s) or religion(s) experience grief? Are there any rules or traditions about *how* someone like yourself should grieve? Are there any traditions or rules about *how long* someone like yourself should grieve?

E3. In your opinion, is how you feel and act different than what people in your culture expect for someone who is experiencing grief?

E4. Based on responses of E1 – E3, evaluate whether the interviewee's duration of grief symptoms clearly exceeds the social, cultural, or religious norms for their culture and context.

Does not exceed social, cultural or religious norms	Exceeds social, cultural, or religious norms
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E5. Based on responses of E1 – E3, evaluate whether the interviewee's severity of grief symptoms clearly exceeds the social, cultural, or religious norms for their culture and context.

Does not exceed social, cultural or religious norms	Exceeds social, cultural, or religious norms
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Criterion F: Differential diagnosis

F1. Are the symptoms reported by the participant better explained by major depressive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, or another mental disorder, or attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., medication, alcohol) or another medical condition?

Yes

No

Global Ratings

Estimate the overall validity of responses. Consider factors such as compliance with the interview, mental status (e.g., problems with concentration, comprehension of items, dissociation), and evidence of efforts to exaggerate or minimize symptoms.

Invalid responses, severely impaired mental status or possible deliberate "faking bad" or "faking good"	Poor, factors present that clearly reduce validity	Fair, factors present that may reduce validity	Good, factors present that may adversely affect validity	Excellent, no reason to suspect invalid responses
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Estimate the overall severity of PGD symptoms. Consider degree of subjective distress, degree of functional impairment, observations of behaviors in interview, and judgment regarding reporting style.

No clinically significant symptoms, no distress and no functional impairment	Mild, minimal distress or functional impairment	Moderate, definite distress or functional impairment that is not incapacitating	Severe, considerable distress or functional impairment, limited functioning even with effort
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