

Press Release

Grief is not a disorder

Berlin, 13 December 2018. The German Hospice and Palliative Care Association (DHPV) is publishing this statement today to express its opposition to moves to add the diagnosis of 'prolonged grief disorder' diagnosis to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Introducing this diagnosis runs the risk of perceiving grief as a 'disorder' and time-scaling the grieving process.

"Generally speaking, the introduction of a diagnosis that enables people to seek psychotherapeutic support after suffering a loss is a very welcome development," says Professor Winfried Hardinghaus, Chairman of the DHPV. "Calling it a disorder runs counter to any positive notion of grief, however."

The DHPV suggests using the term 'post-loss stress disorder' instead. On the one hand, this term does justice to the fact that there are indeed experiences of loss which require therapeutic support. Above all, however, it accounts for the efforts and successes in recent decades in establishing a new culture of grieving.

"In post-war Germany especially, the path towards understanding grieving as a process was long, which is fundamentally meaningful and takes time," says Kläre Winhuysen, **Head of the Bereavement Section** at the DHPV. "The envisaged inclusion in the ICD-11 coding system is putting this development in jeopardy."

Background

The draft proposed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the new eleventh version of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (in short: ICD-11) designates a new category, 6B42, "Prolonged grief disorder". ICD-11 is expected to be adopted by the World Health Assembly next year and come into effect from January 2022.

The German Hospice and Palliative Care Association has been lobbying on behalf of the hospice movement as well as hospice and

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Kommentiert [BA1]: Diese englische Bezeichnung haben wir uns ausgedacht. Sollte es eine offizielle englische Bezeichnung geben, lassen Sie uns das bitte wissen. Danke.

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palliative care centres throughout Germany since 1992. As the umbrella organisation for regional associations in 16 federal states as well as other supra-regional organisations for hospice and palliative care, and as a natural partner within the healthcare system and in politics, the DPHV represents over 1,200 hospice and palliative care centres and facilities with over 120,000 volunteers, civic and full-time employees.

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