

Table 2: Stages of Grieving. A Model of Family Response to Mental Illness

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| Stage 1: Initial Awareness | <i>"We just thought we had a difficult child – we didn't recognise the mental illness."</i> |
| Stage 2: Denial | <i>"When he first got ill, I thought he was on drugs."</i> |
| Stage 3: Labelling (At the time of a dramatic crisis which requires more drastic action than calling the family doctor or consulting the school counsellor.) | <i>"It was when she attacked her father in the car."</i> |
| Stage 4: Faith in Mental Health Professionals | <i>"Yes, we trusted the psychiatrists. If you have a broken leg, you go to the doctor."</i> |
| Stage 5: Recurrent Crises | <i>"When he first got ill, I thought he was on drugs."</i> |
| Stage 6: Recognition of Chronicity | <i>"It's an incurable situation is what we're finding. I still find it hard to accept."</i> |
| Stage 7: Loss of Faith in Mental Health Professionals | <i>"Years ago, we being 'dummy parents' thought the experts knew what they were doing."</i> |
| Stage 8: Belief in the Family's Expertise | <i>"When somebody is in the home with you all the time, you get to know when medication is working and when it isn't."</i> |
| Stage 9: Worrying About the Future | <i>"The future is the biggest question on my mind. My husband is 60 and I'm 59. And we hope to live forever, as long as our son does. Who's going to care about him as much as we do?"</i> |

(Tessler RC, Killian LM, Gubman GD. Stages in family response to mental illness: an ideal type. *Psychosoc Rehab J* 1987; 10: 4-16.)