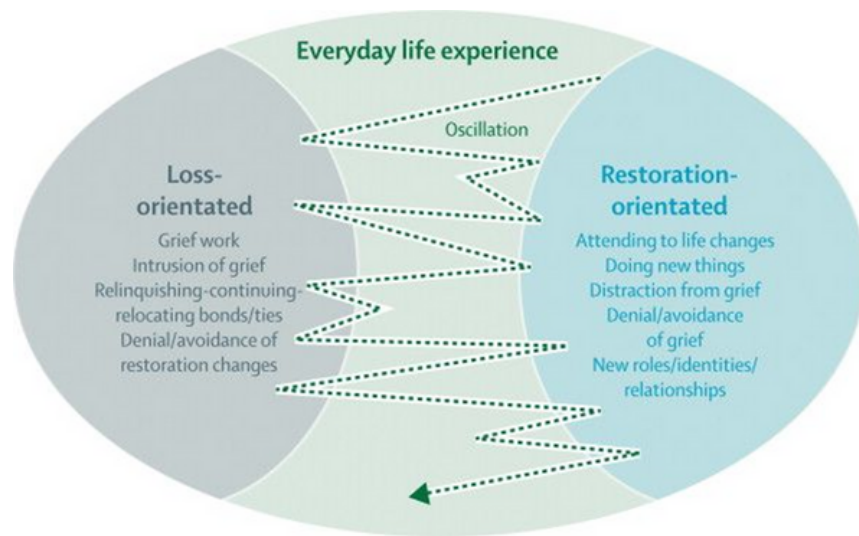


A theory of grief

The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement was developed by Stroebe and Schut in the late 1990s. They wanted to provide a model that would better describe how bereaved people cope.

The theory is that if coping is effective then the suffering and potential mental and physical ill health following a bereavement should be reduced.



The two categories of stressors are:

1. Loss-orientated:

When the bereaved person concentrates on thinking about and processing their loss. This could include dwelling on the person who has died.

2. Restoration-orientation:

Focus on the secondary stressors that come with a loss. It can be a struggle to get used to a changed world without the deceased person. Re-thinking and re-planning life following a bereavement can also be thought of as an essential part of grieving.

The model shows a dynamic coping process: at times the bereaved will confront aspects of their loss or practical tasks, and at other times avoid them. Moving between the two types of stressors is necessary for adaptive coping.

Normal reactions can vary greatly between individuals in relation to their preferred orientation.

Grief can be extremely painful but the intensity of this may lessen, for some, as they begin to learn to cope with their loss. Others may experience prolonged grief, lasting months or years.