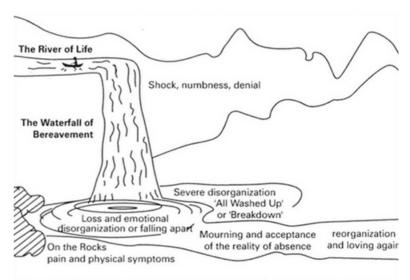




### What is grief?

Grief is our natural response to loss. It is expected that we will grieve the loss of a loved one, but we can also experience grief when we have had other losses in life too.

Losing a pet can have a huge impact on some people and we can also be affected by the death of well-known people that we haven't personally met. Sometimes when the relationship has been difficult the grief may feel more complicated.



Bereavement is what happens to you; grief is what you feel; mourning is what you do.

Source: Counselling in your Community; Coping with loss and bereavement

"Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape."

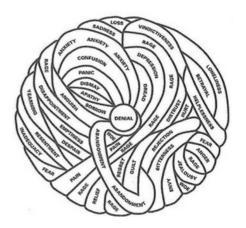
C. S. Lewis

# Grief is both unique and universal

There isn't a 'right way' to grieve. Grief doesn't come with a road map or instruction manual. It is impacted by the way in which the death occurred, the relationship we had with the person who died, our own coping styles and existing support networks.

For those who are experiencing grief for the first time, it can feel like a rollercoaster of emotions which can arrive unexpectedly and can feel difficult to manage. People can wonder if how they are feeling is 'normal'. Whilst grief is a very personal and unique experience, there are shared emotions and responses that people can relate to.

### BALL OF GRIEF A TANGLED "BALL" OF EMOTIONS



Source: The New Guide to Crisis &. Trauma Counselling (2003) H. Norman Wright

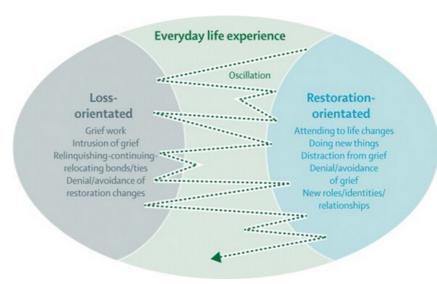
There are so many different emotions that people may experience after a death. There isn't a pattern to how feelings may arrive or how long they stay. Grieving can challenge us emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally, practically and financially, impacting our lives in many different ways.



## 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.