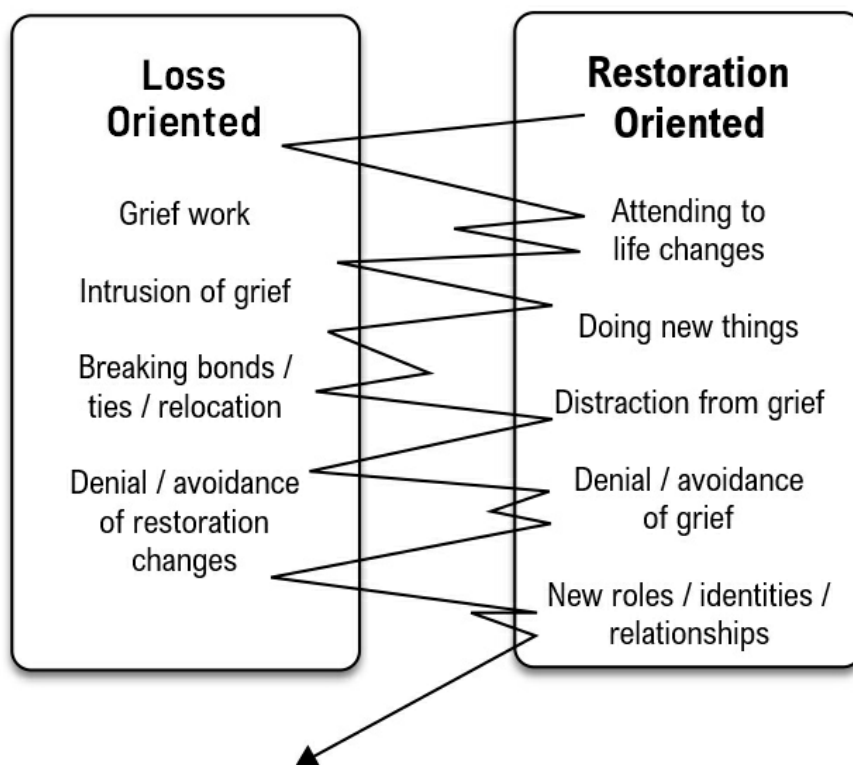


The Dual Process Model of Grief

The dual process model of grief (Stroebe & Schut) explains that there are two ways in which a person can process their bereavement: loss-oriented and restoration-oriented. Within this concept lies the notion that time spent not actively always processing grief is an important part of healthy bereavement.



Loss-oriented

The loss-oriented process includes 'sitting in' all the stressors of the loss and focusing on your grief – ie. yearning for your loved one, crying over them, thinking of life without them in it which may bring up a range of powerful emotions such as pain, anger, sadness, longing, all of which are a normal response.

Restoration-oriented

Restoration-oriented coping involves tuning out your bereavement and focusing on other things that let you get on with daily life and distract you from your grief for a while which might include cleaning the house, cooking, working, hobbies and even binge-watching your favourite series on Netflix! In order to cope we need to avoid thinking about grief ALL of the time, and use other means of distraction or throw ourselves into work, interests, new relationships etc. and be able to temporarily forget about the person who has passed away when absorbed with something else, even if only for a few minutes. The avoidance is not considered a negative part of grieving but in fact, a vital one – being able to tune out bereavement and focus on some other practical task is beneficial BUT only when balanced with loss-oriented coping. It is called restoration-oriented because it is a behaviour that is trying to restore order and normality.



Oscillation

The dual process has become a favoured model as it is a response to the gaps left by other grief models because it takes into account that life continues when a person is grieving and that having to cope with unrelated life challenges at the same time is actually a part of working through it. The significant aspect of this loss/restoration coping as a dual process is the fluctuation between the two states of coping and it is likely that you will swing back and forth between them. As you grieve you may oscillate between the different modes of being which is why it is called a dual-process model.

You may be oscillating between the two modes without actually knowing it. For example, it might be that you were watching an amusing Youtube clip which made you laugh; that is restoration-oriented. Then you came across a cherished photo of your loved one that brought up sad emotions in you; that is loss-oriented. After feeling sad for some time, you then decide that you need to get ready to pick the kids up from school and whilst driving there, you feel less focused on your pain as you are concentrating on driving; that's restoration-oriented.

You may find the dual process can be an easier way to manage grief because it takes the emphasis away from confronting very difficult feelings or emotions and accepts that distractions can help you to cope. This model is a normal, healthy approach to dealing with grief.

You may find it helpful to create a Loss/Restoration diary and observe how you feel at different times of the day, making note of what you were doing at a specific time.

Over a period of time, hopefully you will observe how you are progressing with your grief and find yourself more in Restoration activities.

