



# Grief Theories

NCHPP Bereavement  
Professional Chat  
June 2017

Sarah Layton [sarah.layton@hrc-manorcare.com](mailto:sarah.layton@hrc-manorcare.com)

Joelle Osterhaus [joelle.k.osterhaus@kp.org](mailto:joelle.k.osterhaus@kp.org)

# Worden's Tasks of Grief

Task I – to accept the reality of the loss  
(not believing)

Task II – to process the pain of grief  
(not feeling)

Task III – to adjust to a world without the deceased  
( we'll talk more on this one)

Task IV – to find an enduring connection with the deceased while  
embarking on a new life  
(not moving forward)

(Worden, 2009)

# Worden's Tasks III & IV

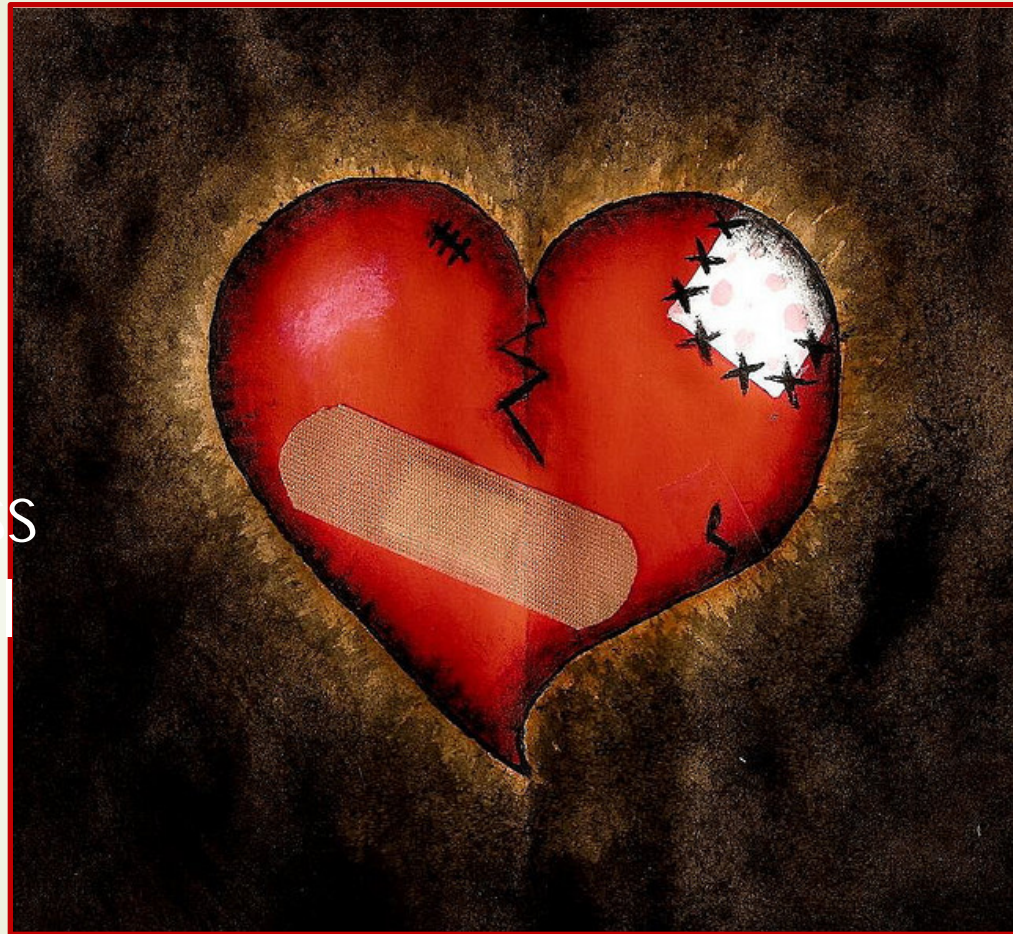
Task III – to adjust to a world without the deceased

- External adjustments: living daily without the person - or not adjusting
- Internal adjustments: who am I now? - or not growing
- Spiritual adjustments: reframe assumptive world – or not understanding

Task IV - to find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life

(not moving forward)

# The Dual Process Model



Stroebe & Schut (Death Studies, 1999)





# Dual Process Model

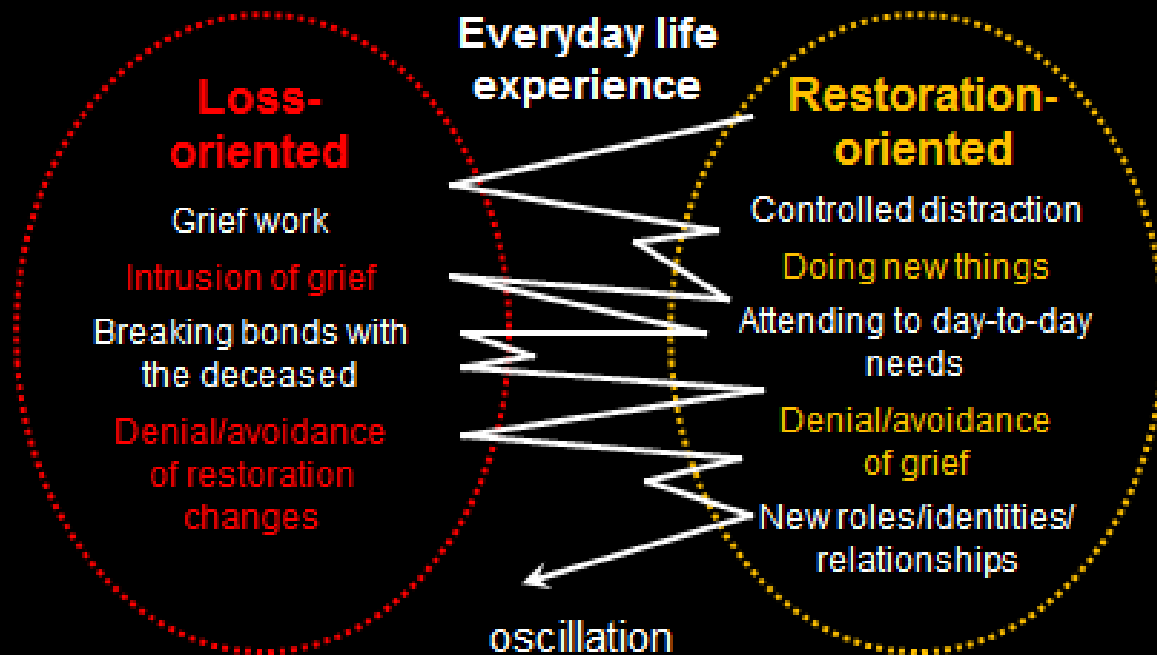


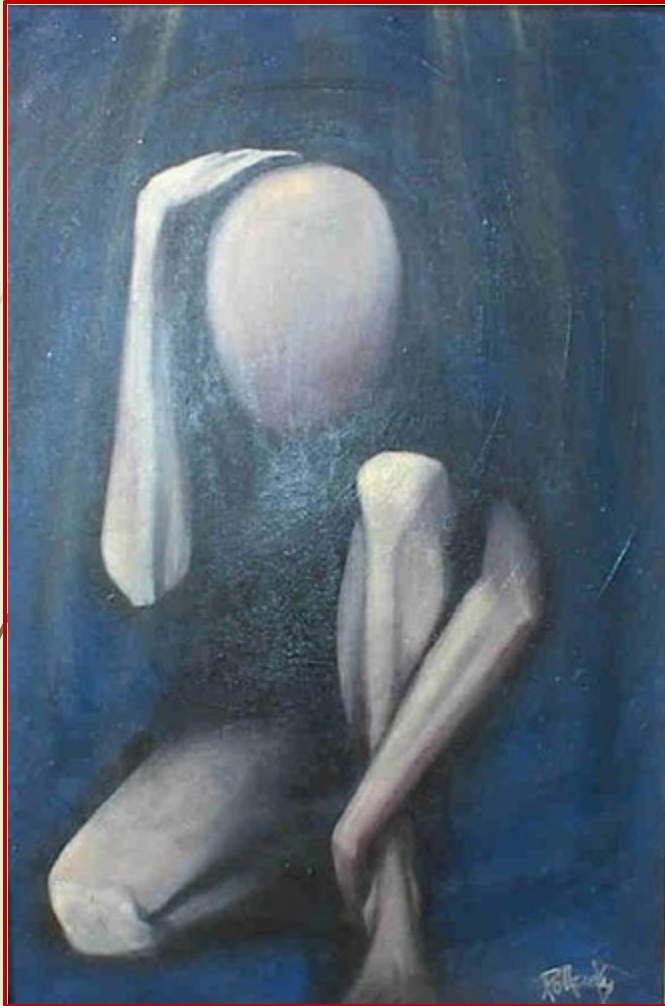
## Deals with 2 types of stressors

- Loss Orientation
  - Focuses on the deceased, death events and losses
- Restoration Orientation
  - Deals with secondary stressors such as running a household and finances

## The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement

Stroebe & Schut (Death Studies, 1999)






## Meaning Making/ Meaning Reconstruction

# Loss of Meaning Theory

- Individual cannot make sense of the death
- Potential Loss of beliefs
  - The world is a benevolent place
  - The world is meaningful
  - The self is worthy
- To heal
  - Change assumptions about the world to accommodate the loss
  - Change how we see the loss






...we are shaped and sustained by our shifting patterns of attachment to people, places, projects, and possessions that largely anchor the meaning of our lives. The loss of these attachments challenges our tacit assumptions about who we are and prompts revisions in our life narratives that can sometimes be deep going.

Niemeyer (2001)



# Loss of meaning theory

Niemeyer: Making sense of the death

- 
- By talking at length about details of the deceased's life or death and telling the story again and again



# Meaning Making Models

## Rynearson: Retelling violent death

- Retelling story to include role for the mourner
- End futile search for meaning in violent death
- Restore the living presence of the deceased



# Meaning Making Models

Ways to make sense of the death

- Narrative forms: reminiscing, journaling
- Artwork
- Cultural practices, spiritual traditions or memorials



# Meaning Making Models

## Bereavement Rituals

- Express thoughts and emotions symbolically
- Bereavement rituals:
  - Affirm the death
  - Recall the loved one
  - Express the mourner's thoughts and feelings
  - Assist in saying good-bye
  - Symbolize transition back into life





# Meaning Making

Grieving is the act of affirming or reconstructing a personal world of meaning that has been challenged by loss

We construct and reconstruct our identity as survivors in connection with others

Adaptation to loss involves restoration of coherence to the narratives of our lives.

Neimeyer (2001)



# Continuing Bonds


A dynamic bond that shifts and changes over time as the bereaved adapts to the loss through “negotiating and renegotiating the meaning of the loss.”

Corr, Nabe & Corr (2009)

This kind of connection, “provided solace, comfort and support and eased the transition from the past to the future.”

Klass, Silverman & Nickman (1996)





Lisa Prosser-Dodds, Ph.D., studies the relationship between personality types (Myers-Briggs) and grief. She currently defines four GRIEFTypes:

- Mastery Grievers (intuitive, Thinking)
- Practical Grievers (Sensing, Thinking)
- Searching Grievers (intuitive, Feeling)
- Guardian Grievers (Sensing, Feeling)

YouTube; *Grieving Styles Myers Briggs Episode 27*

[\*www.lisaprosserdodds.com/griefftype/\*](http://www.lisaprosserdodds.com/griefftype/)

# Resources

Worden, J. W. (2009) *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy* (fourth edition) New York, New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Stroebe M., Schut, H. *The dual process model of coping with bereavement: rationale and description*. *Death studies*. 1999, 23:197-224.

Niemeyer, R.A. (2001) *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss*.

Klass D, Silverman P , Nickman s (eds) (1996) *Continuing bonds: new understandings of grief*. Washington: Taylor and Francis.