

# ABOUT GRIEF

Grief is not one emotion.

Grief is more than an emotional response.

Grief affects how we think, feel and act. (See handout “Symptoms of grief”)

There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

The grieving process is different for different people.

The time it takes to integrate loss into one’s life is different for different people.

Grieving does not happen in stages – it is unpredictable.

There is no normal way to grieve.

Grieving does not come to an end – grieving and healing can happen together.

Grieving typically begins with a period of high or acute distress, progressing to lower levels of distress over time.

People move from acute grief, questioning how they will ever be happy again, to gradually becoming more engaged in life. When grief becomes integrated, bereaved parents move forward in their lives with meaning and purpose, with their grief receding into the background.

The model below (by Stroebe & Schut, 2010) depicts how the experience of grief is a gradual movement over time, from a *loss orientation* towards a *restoration orientation*, with fewer periods of grief as time goes on.

In the restoration orientation, you might notice becoming more able to focus on other things, to get things done, to be absorbed or interested in other aspects of your life, and over time, to experience meaning, purpose and joy.

## Reference

Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (2010). The dual process model of coping with bereavement: A decade on. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*, 61(4), 273-289.

