



DUAL PROCESS MODEL OF GRIEF

The dual process model of grief is a holistic approach for coping with grief and loss. It moves away from previous grief models and theories, acknowledging individual experiences as different and unique.

Within this article you will:

- Identify key parts of the dual process model of grief.
- Apply the dual process model to real life situations.
- Discuss how this model can help people to cope with bereavement.
- Explore the differences between the dual process model of grief and earlier theories.

5 Stages of Loss

[Stoebe & Schut first delivered the dual process model of bereavement](#) in 1995, further developing their ideas in the journal of death studies (1999).

Their work was different from traditional theories of grief, such as the [5 stages of loss](#). These earlier theories focus on individuals confronting and facing the pain and loss that they are experiencing.

The dual process model of grief, however, states that both denying and avoiding are important parts of a healthy grieving process.

Dual Process Model of Loss and Grief

The dual process model states that earlier theories of grief are firmly rooted in [stereotypes](#) of female grieving, where females were seen as being more-able and willing to express emotion. Males, therefore, can often be lost within this process.

This model states that traditional theories are based on the Western, medical model of health and well-being, disregarding others.

Coping with grief and loss

The dual process model of grief focuses on **stressors** linked to grief.

The 2 types of stressors here are '**loss orientated**' and '**restoration orientated**'.

Both require coping. Taking breaks within this coping is essential for people within the grieving process.

Examples of coping with loss

Restoration-orientated focuses on the demands of living after the loss. It can be isolating and stressful learning new skills or tasks that the deceased person used to do.

These can involve:

- Cooking
- Financial affairs
- DIY
- Childcare
- Finding employment
- Household chores

Loss-orientated focuses on emotionally processing the loss of the person who has died.

This might involve:

- Memories
- Reminiscing
- Yearning
- Crying
- Imagining

Oscillation (moving backwards and forwards) between facing and avoiding the loss is a key part of the dual process model.

This is viewed as a natural part of grief and presents a more accepting, holistic and inclusive approach to working through it. Individuals can find a balance between facing loss and re-engaging with life after loss.

Normalising the grieving process

The dual process model can help individuals to understand that what they are going through is 'normal'. They are not alone in their feelings of coping and not coping, facing things and avoiding them.

Shifting between these feelings is common and expected. It can help Individuals feel comforted that their feelings, actions and behaviours within the grieving process are natural.

Holistic model of loss and grief

The dual process model of coping places no judgement on individuals within the grieving process as the counsellor will view the client with unconditional positive regard. No one method of coping (loss-orientated or restoration-orientated) is better than the other.

This is an inclusive and holistic model, focusing on individual phenomenological experiencing within the complex area of grief and loss.