

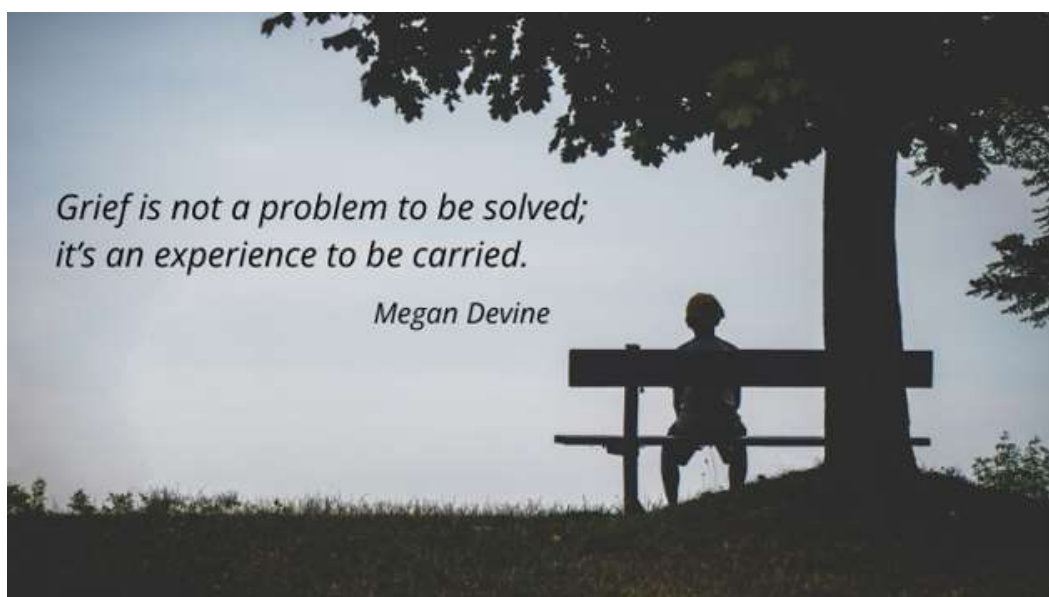


Kia ora, Bula & Hello

Following on from our last newsletter where we talked about recognising five of the common stages of grief, this month we take a deeper look at loss and grief.

The New Zealand Oxford Dictionary defines grief as being 'Distress through loss'; a deceptively simple description for the suffering we can experience when someone or something we love or care about is lost to us. Although a totally natural response and a part of being human, grief can feel overwhelming, and while each of us will have unique feelings and reactions, we have captured some ideas in our latest blog that have the potential to help when coping with loss and grief...

Read blog – www.raisementalhealth.co.nz/grief-the-cost-of-having-loved-and-lost



Grief models and theories

As an integral part of living, grief generates much interest and research. Myriad theories have been developed over time, but one thing experts tend to agree on is that while grief is a universal experience, it is also a deeply personal one, and we should each allow ourselves to grieve in our own way, in our own time. There are no set rules to live by; only opportunities to learn and try different things to discover what works best for us personally. For some, looking into theories and considering various schools of thought can help with understanding and coping with loss.

One such example is the dual process model, a theory for coping with bereavement that was developed in the mid-90s by psychologists, Margaret Stroebe and Henk Schut (Stroebe, M.S. & Schut, H.A.W. 1999). This theory suggests that grief works in two main ways, and that we switch back and forth between them as we grieve. We often hear of grief talked about as something that must be 'worked through' or 'faced head on', but Stroebe and Schut don't believe this to be the case. They suggest that sometimes ignoring our emotions, or distracting ourselves from our grief, is a natural way of coping. They theorise that we move between 'loss-oriented coping' (things that focus on our grief) and 'restoration-oriented coping' (things that focus on rebuilding our lives).

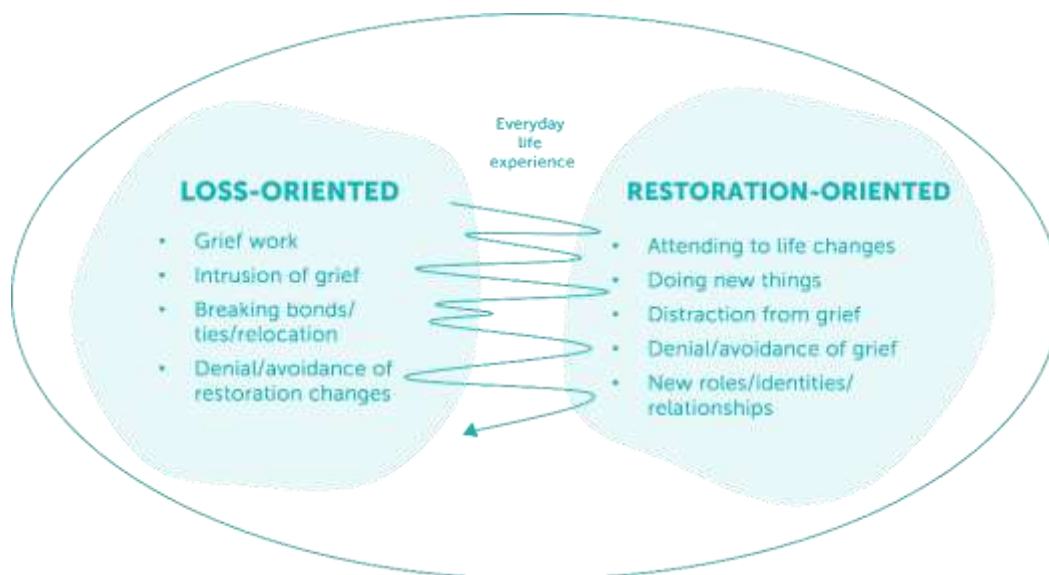
Loss-oriented stressors

Thoughts, feelings, and actions that focus on our grief, such as thinking about how much we miss our loved one, looking at old photos, recalling particular memories, visiting favourite places we went to together. Loss-oriented stressors can bring up a lot of powerful emotions, such as sadness, loneliness, overwhelm, and anger.

Restoration-oriented stressors

Things that let us get on with daily life and distract us from our grief, even if only for a short time, allowing a small break from our pain. Things like watching a funny show, meeting with friends, or exercising. This is our mind's way of easing the pain a little and giving us a few moments to focus on getting practical tasks done.

Some people find the dual process model a helpful way of thinking about their grief because it doesn't place all the emphasis on confronting their feelings.



If you're interested in taking a deeper look at models and theories of grief, there is an abundance of information online. You can choose to search academic articles or plain-language information, so there is something for everyone. Here are some links to get you started:

The Dual Process Model

lovetoknow.com/life/grief-loss/dual-process-model-grief-simple-terms

Reconstruction of Meaning

funeralguide.co.uk/help-resources/bereavement-support/the-grieving-process/reconstruction-of-meaning

Intuitive vs Instrumental Grieving

www.mygriefassist.com.au/factsheets/factsheet-24-intuitive-vs-instrumental-grievers/

Attachment Theory

www.psychologytoday.com/nz/blog/navigating-the-serpentine-path/202210/understanding-loss-grief-and-attachment-theory

Growing Around Grief

www.whatsyourgrief.com/growing-around-grief/

The 4 Tasks of Grieving

www.psychologytoday.com/nz/blog/mental-health-nerd/201911/the-4-tasks-grieving

Five things you can do to help your grieving process

Deliberately distracting our attention from our grief can be helpful in building perspective and hope. Here we share some ideas for ways to do that which may also help prompt some ideas of your own.

Gratitude

Take a few minutes to write down three things you're grateful for or that are going OK in your life, then as you read back through them, feel the feelings of gratitude. Do this at least once a day to help it become a habit to seek out the positive.



Breathe

Whenever you feel emotionally overwhelmed, stop, sit or stand still, and breathe. Shut your eyes if that helps. Count ten full breaths. During that time, try to only focus on your breath and counting. This helps our body to regulate and reset (as opposed to activating its fight or flight response system).



Sound

Listen to something that makes you feel better, even temporarily. This could be things like listening to music you love (it could be calming or upbeat, so long as you enjoy it), podcasts by those you are inspired by, the sounds of nature, or audiobooks by your favourite authors.



Meditation

All you need is somewhere you can sit or lie comfortably, indoors or out, without being disturbed for a few minutes. Take the time to focus on each part of your body, from your toes to the top of your head. Where you come across tension, deliberately relax that area before moving on to the next.



Connect with nature

Take a walk and as you do, observe what's around you. Notice what you see and what you can hear. Or try planting something that you can observe growing. Whether it's a potted plant or something grown from seed, nurturing something and seeing it grow can bring beauty into our world and remind us of the natural cycle of life.



Mental Health Awareness Week 2023

With next week being Mental Health Awareness Week, you may have some workplace activities planned. We hope you find the week an informative and uplifting time!

If you or any of your colleagues find the focus of the week brings up some challenges and you could do with some support, remember that your Raise EAP team is here to help.

Raise resources

Mental Health and Awareness and the Te Whare Tapa Whā health model

www.raisementalhealth.co.nz/mental-health-awareness.html

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing blog

www.raisementalhealth.co.nz/the-5-ways-to-wellbeing

Raise is here to help

If you could do with some personalised professional support, don't hesitate to get in touch.

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