Working with the Two Track Model of Bereavement: Perspectives on grief and loss

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How does one think about, measure, and if need be, intervene following loss and death?
Many laypersons and professionals consider how one is "managing". This can mean: health or illness; degree of sadness or depression; anxiety; ability to function at work; ability to find support in family, culture, or religion; meaning structures; etc.

What about the uniquely relational and interpersonal aspects of the death of a loved one? How and where do professionals and laypersons look at that?
This can mean: How often one thinks of the loved one; whether one feels only sadness or also support from the memory; how strong is the yearning and what is yearned for; and many other aspects of the unique relationship between self and the deceased.

The TWO TRACK MODEL OF Bereavement (Rubin, 1981, 1984, 1991, 1996, 1998, 2000, etc) focuses on both domains of response to loss: (Track I) The way people "manage" to live their lives following the death of a significant other and (Track II) the way in which the uniquely relational and interpersonal aspects of the connection with the deceased are maintained in the minds and hearts of the bereaved.

The Two Track Model of Bereavement
ASSESS BOTH TRACKS and DECIDE WHERE TO INTERVENE

TRACK I assesses function— in bereaved and non-bereaved

For Example
How productive at work is the bereaved person 1 week, 1 month, 1 year, after loss?
**Track I: General Functioning Domains to Assess**

- Somatic problems
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Meaning Structure
- Psychiatric Sympt.
- Emotional Investment (?)
- Work
- Self Esteem
- Family Relations
- Other Interpersonal
- Post-trauma (PTSD)

The Two Track Model of Bereavement

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**Track II: Relationship to the Deceased**

For Example: How does the bereaved person think about the deceased 1 week, 1 month, 1 year, 10 years, after the loss?

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**Relationship to the Deceased – Track II – emphasize continuing bonds:**

This means ongoing attachment that focuses us on questions of: the nature, the intensity, the predominance, the quality, the uniqueness, the quality of those ongoing bonds for the individual, family, and culture.

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**What are the factors that should concern us following interpersonal loss?**

**Q:** Is it how one manages "life" tasks or is it how the person manages "reorganization"/ (not detachment) vis a vis the deceased? Answer: BOTH!

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**THERAPEUTIC IMPLICATIONS of Two Track Model of Bereavement**

- **Select your focus – Track I (and why)**
- **Track II (and why)**

Listening versus intervening – not same.

Continuing involvement with memories of deceased is normative for many cultures and traditions in East and West – but WHAT is the nature of the involvement? EXPLORE THAT as TRACK II!
THERAPEUTIC IMPLICATIONS of Two-Track Model of Bereavement

Help loosen what is frozen, for example:
Is trauma blocking access to thoughts and feelings?
Is emotional conflict to the deceased blocking access?
Is intense focus on deceased blocking access to life?
Are gender differences, personality style differences complicating things?

Website: From the inscription on the gravestone: "Asaf loved the sea, friends, music, and life. Asaf, we love you, we will always remember you, and we will miss you every day."
The website contains these pictures and explanation: "The monument on his grave was designed as a surfboard that goes out to the sea. The design was designed by his parents to keep alive this love. This way, he will surf for all eternity."

Closing Remarks: Relationship to the deceased is all around us. This is one source, from the website of the Tzur family. Asaf was killed in 2003.

Website: "Asaf Tzur (Blondi). Angel of 17. Born 27.4.86. Died 5.3.2003. Killed... in the Suicide bombing in Haifa."

Two Track Model of Bereavement

Selected References


Two Track Model of Bereavement

Further Resources

- Research studies
- Theory
- Clinical Material
- WEBSITE HAS ARTICLES and MATERIALS: http://psy.haifa.ac.il/~rubin

THANK YOU