

Medical Model

Loss is treated as an illness to be cured

Focus on symptoms

Prolonged or severe symptoms treated as pathology

Medication can relieve symptoms

Pain is to be avoided

Stability is recovered when patient's level of pain decreases and new relationships are formed

Letting go of the relationship to the loved one is healthy

The only thing that changes is the absence of the loved one

Get back to "normal"

Loss is a disruption of what had been desirable

The grief process is a straight line from loss to healing

Loss is senseless and meaningless

Time heals all wounds

The bereaved are victims

Transformative Model

Loss is treated as a change in both the individual and their social and cultural context

Focus on source of the problem

Individual differences recognized as normal responses to a reality that has been changed on multiple levels

Medication can complicate grief process and mask symptoms

Pain is an attendant of change

Stability is recovered when individual learns how to navigate and find meaning in his/her new world

Reconnecting to the loved one in a new way is healthy

Everything changes

Find the new "normal"

Loss can be the catalyst for positive change and growth

The grief process is a spiraling movement from Circle #1 to Circle #2

We can find meaning, and even fulfillment, after a loss as we discover our changed world

Living in an actively therapeutic way promotes healing

The bereaved are choosers and co-creators