

“Supporting Children & Teens Coping with Loss: Practical Strategies & Interventions”

by

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Description of presentation:

What we see as we work with young people is not always obvious! Situations concerning losses, of any type, are a part of life and occur on a regular basis in the lives of children and adolescents. Grief, however, is often more traumatic and severe for a child and an adolescent than an adult. The outcome of grief is less predictable and may be more emotionally crippling because the young person is building a foundation for emotional growth and development. **What is our role when loss affects young people, both outside and within the school setting?** This program will provide insights into the world of grieving young people; it will provide strategies and interventions to help young people and families trying to cope with the opportunities and struggles on the “loss journey.”



Objectives for today.....

1. Describe **four different types** of “losses.”
2. List factors which **complicate** a child or teens grief.
3. Describe the **developmental impact of grief on children & teenagers** and how they grieve.
4. Describe **“supporting students”** and **“debriefing them.”**



Crisis-

“an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs whose outcome will make a decisive difference for better or for worse.”

Webster's Dictionary



Chinese Symbol for Crisis - Has two meanings.....



Danger and Opportunity



As you *listen* to your
students, or *other*
individual's stories

....*AND*...as you think of
who you are...

Listen for *themes of loss.*



Four different types of losses...

First.....



Four different types of losses...

Second.....



Four different types of losses...

Third.....



Four different types of losses...

Fourth.....



*Who are the
co-authors
of the student's
life you are
working (helping) with?*



“Windows in time”

Through different Generational lenses

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Birthyears</i>	<i>Age in 2010</i>	<i>Age in 2013</i>
<i>G.I.</i>	<i>1901-1924</i>	<i>86-109</i>	<i>89-112</i>
<i>Silent</i>	<i>1925-1942</i>	<i>68-85</i>	<i>71-88</i>
<i>Boom</i>	<i>1943-1960</i>	<i>50-67</i>	<i>53-70</i>
<i>Thirteenth</i>	<i>1961-1981</i>	<i>29-49</i>	<i>32-52</i>
<i>Millennial</i>	<i>1982-2003</i>	<i>7-28</i>	<i>10-31</i>
<i>Digital</i>	<i>2004- 2020</i>	<i>(unborn)-6</i>	<i>(unborn)-9</i>

(Generations by Wm. Strauss & Neil Howe, 1991)



***Any loss is
Complicated to those
who are viewing life
through “their lenses.”***



Supporting young people before, during or after a loss...

At the “first encounter” with the young person:

1. Assessment

2. Information giving

3. Help them start to grieve -

“What does loss and grief mean?”

4. Help mobilize their support system

5. Let them do the “Grief Work”

***Don't take their grief away from them.**



Family

How do **THEY**

Define the word family?



How the **young person** and his/her **family responds** to Loss

- 1. What is identified as the loss?*
- 2. Where did the loss (or death) take place?*
- 3. The family make-up at the time of the loss or death.*



How the **young person** and his/her **family responds** to Loss (continued)

4. *Past losses of the ind/family?*

-Individual issues:

-Past psychiatric problems?

-Past suicide attempt?

-CD/Alcohol problems?

-"Re-grief"...?

-"Delayed grief"...?

5. *Social Support System*



How the **young person** and his/her **family responds** to Loss (continued)

6. *Family Characteristics?*

7. *Secondary Losses?*

8. *Quality of the relationship?*

9. *Spiritual/religious beliefs?*

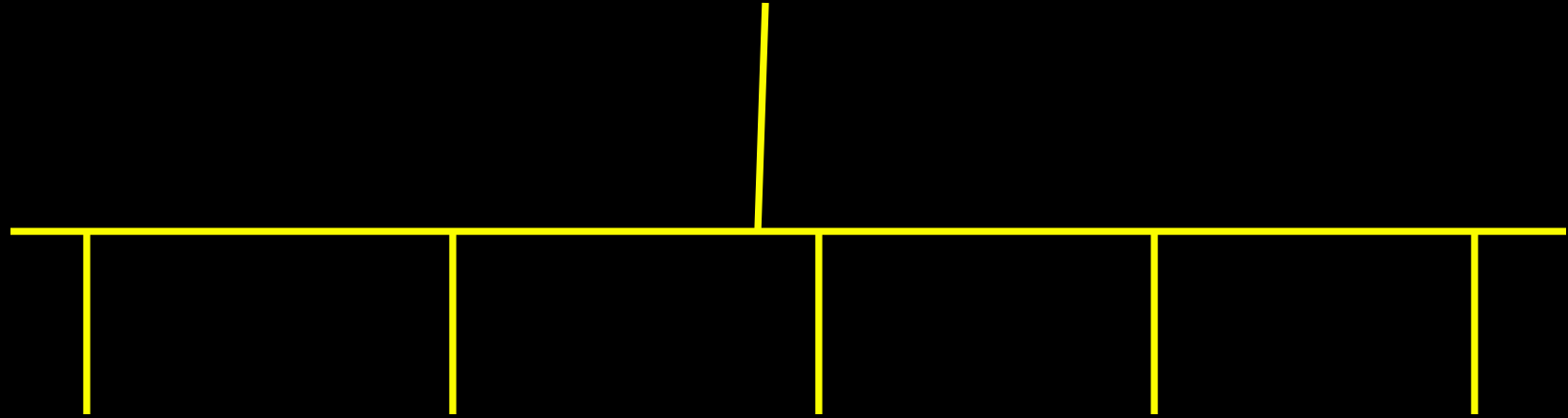


How the **young person** and his/her **family responds** to Loss (continued)

10. *Ethnic/cultural aspects?*
11. *Individual's health?*
12. *Social class - \$*
13. *Age of the griever?*
14. *Gender of the griever?*



Think Mobile... YOUR personal Family Mobile.....



Again...How does **YOUR story
affect who you are?**

What does **YOUR
personal family mobile look like?**



Expected

Death.....



Anticipatory Mourning.... From Four Perspectives

- *Person diagnosed or living with life-threatening/terminal illness*
- *Family and relatives*
- *Concerned others*
- *Caregivers*



When Dealing With A Life-Threatening Illness:

THREE TIME PERIODS TO CONSIDER

FIRST...



Do **YOU** have one????????????....

Health Care Directive

Decision making capacity????

- 1. Part 1....Designate a power of attorney for health care.**
- 2. Part 2.....What are your thoughts about your health care?**
- 3. Part 3....Witnessed or Notarized**



When Dealing With A Life-Threatening Illness:

THREE TIME PERIODS TO CONSIDER

SECOND....



Three Windows to Consider

Window of Opportunity	Window of Rituals	The rest of our life
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Ben Wolfe



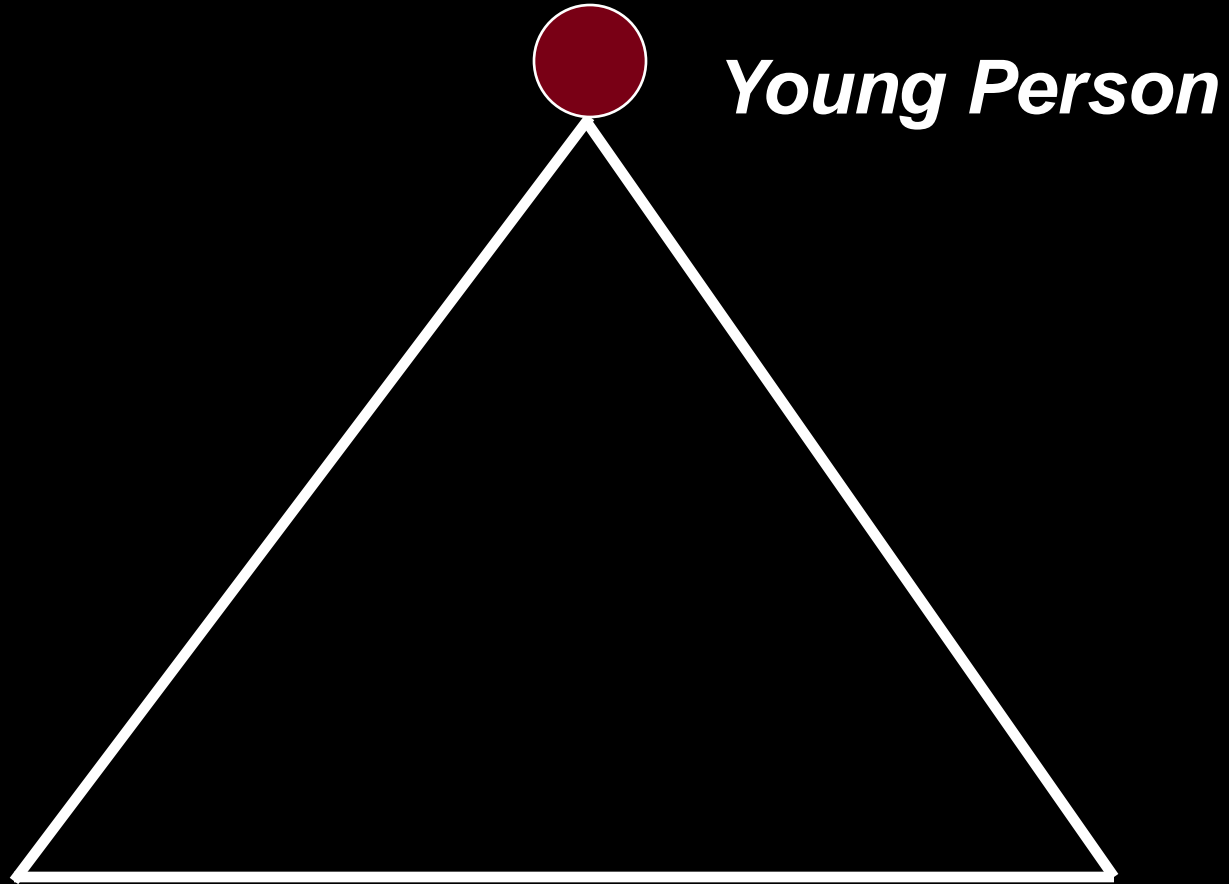
When Dealing With A Life-Threatening Illness:

THREE TIME PERIODS TO CONSIDER

THIRD...



Triangles of Caring....



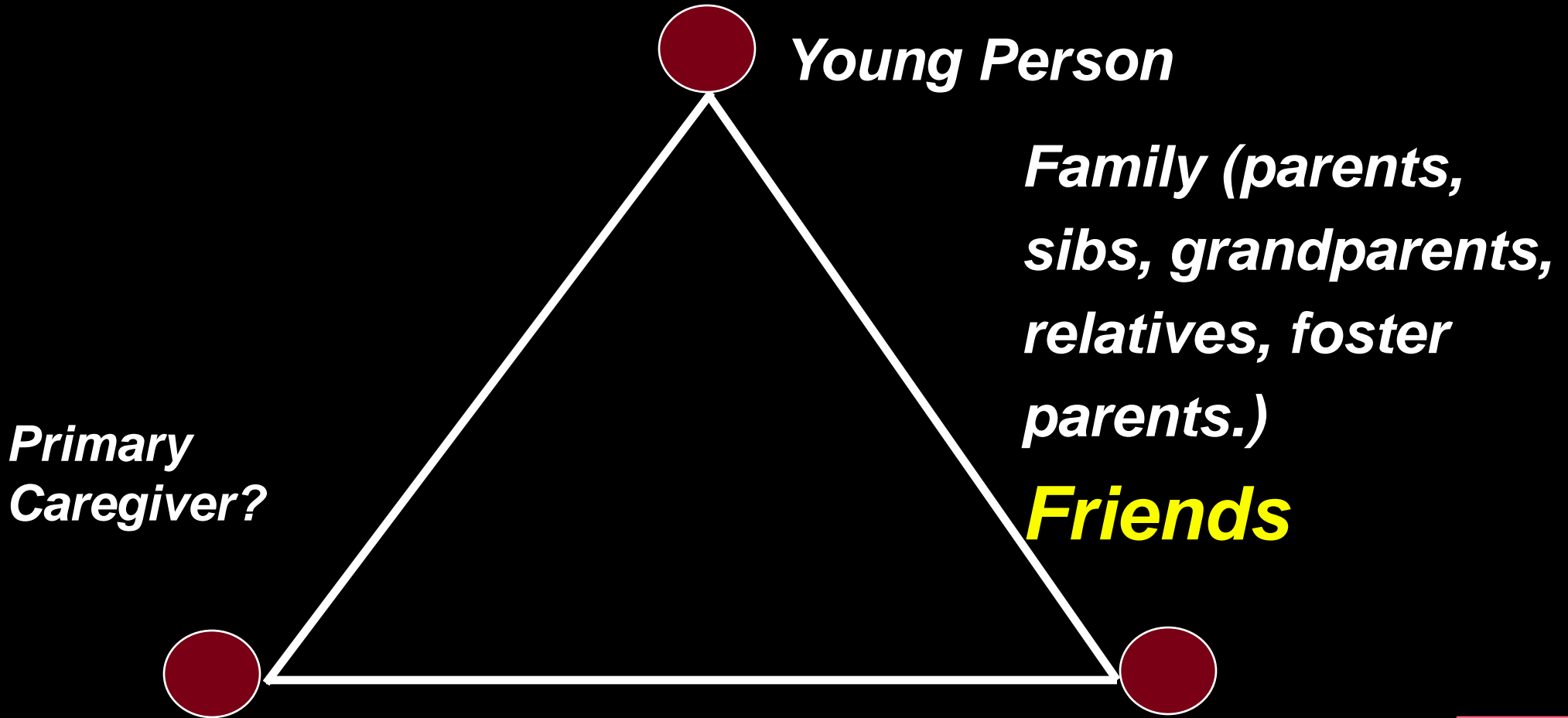
Triangles of Caring....

 *Young Person*

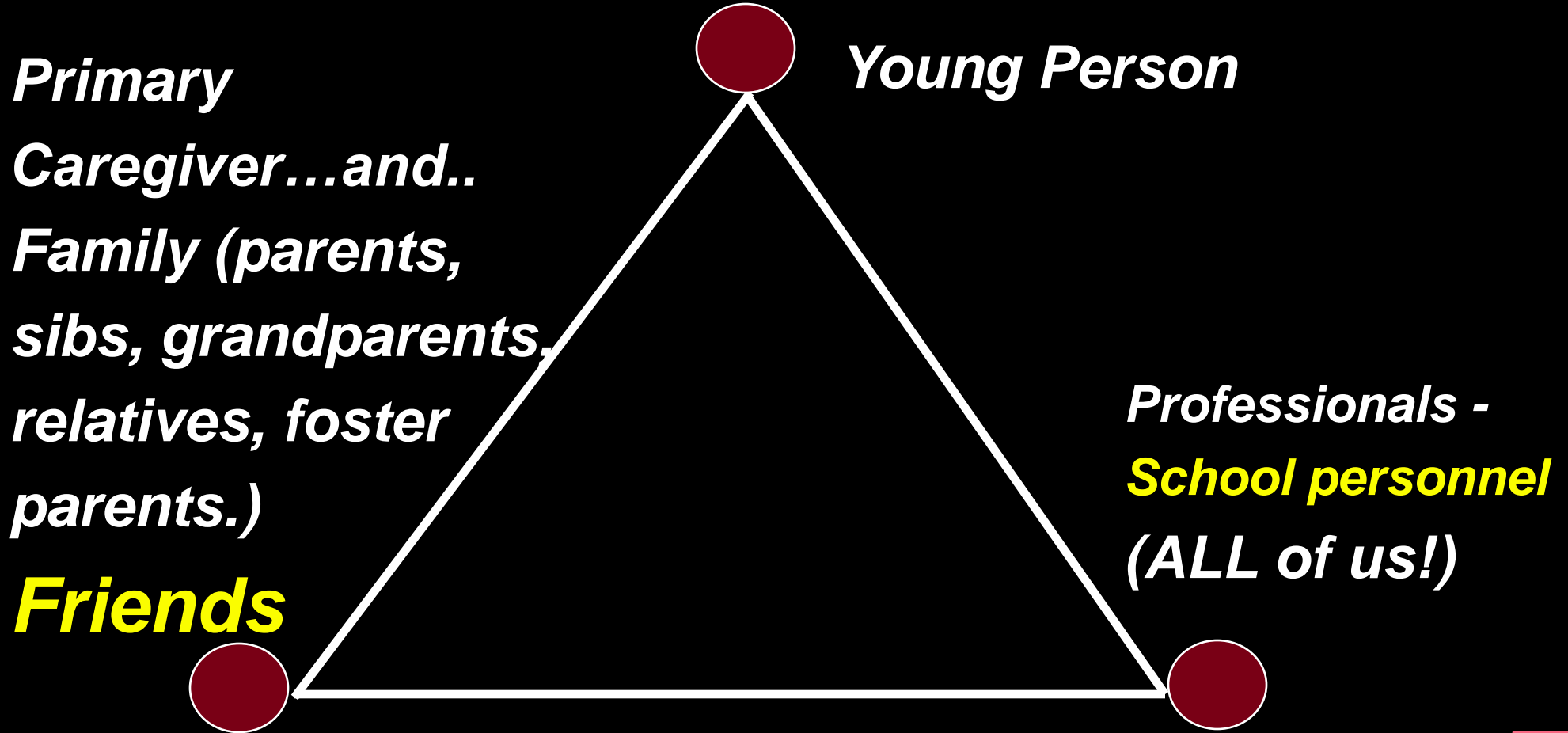
*Who is their
Primary
Caregiver?*



Triangles of Caring....



Triangles of Caring....



***Unexpected
Death.....***



Trauma.....

“is a response, a reaction.....

*it is important to distinguish between
the event as the cause and the trauma
itself as the effect.”*



Complications in Mourning a Traumatic Death

- 1. *Sudden, Unanticipated***
- 2. *Violent, Mutilating, Destructive***
- 3. *Random and /or Preventable***
- 4. *Multiple Deaths***
- 5. *Mourner's Personal Encounter with Death***



Co-Victims....

Who are they?



Children/Adolescents Concept of Death

0-2 *No awareness of death - but “separation”*

3-5 *Reversibility*

- egocentric

- magical thinking

5-9 *Personification*

“When you’re dead, you’re dead.”

9-12 *Death happens to everyone.*

- “Death phobia”

12+ *Adolescents - “developing autonomy”*

- “Biological clock changes”



New look at children's concept of death

- **Universality**
 - All-inclusiveness**
 - Inevitability**
 - Unpredictability**
- **Irreversibility**
- **Nonfunctionality**
- **Causality**
- **Noncorporeal Continuation**

Mark Speece and Sandor Brent (1996)



Adolescent Tasks...and conflicts...

Phase 1 (Early Adolescents)	Age: 11-14 Task: Emotional separation from parents. Conflict: Separation (abandonment versus reunion (safety)).
Phase 2 (Middle Adolescents)	Age: 14-17 Task: Competency/mastery/control Conflict: Independence versus dependence.
Phase 3 (Late Adolescents)	Age: 17-21 Task: Intimacy and commitment. Conflict: Closeness vs. distance.



How do children/adolescents grieve

1. Shock/Denial

2. Disorganization

<i>Anger/Depression</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Sleep patterns</i>
<i>School phobia</i>		<i>Discipline problems</i>
<i>Juvenile delinquency</i>		<i>C.D. problems</i>
<i>Death phobia "awareness"</i>		<i>Tears/Sadness</i>
<i>Nightmares/Hallucinations</i>		<i>Spitting/Kicking/Biting</i>
<i>Regression-bed wetting/defecating</i>		<i>"Reunion thoughts"</i>
<i>Magic thinking</i>	<i>Anger (Non-verbal)</i>	
<i>Fear of Loss Again</i>	<i>Searching and Longing</i>	
<i>Enshrinement</i>	<i>Replacement</i>	
<i>Intimacy issues</i>	<i>Somatic Complaints</i>	

3. Recovery/Integration



What can you or others do to help youngsters

- 1. *Art therapy***
- 2. *Bibliotherapy***
- 3. *Possessions - “tell story”***
- 4. *Pictures***
- 5. *Reading Material (articles)***
- 6. *Puppets***
- 7. *Journaling***



What can you or others do to help youngsters (Continued)

8. Letter writing

9. Activities (“Pieces of the Pie”/Family Tree)

10. Imagery/visualization

11. Individual and/or group counseling

12. Encourage physical exercise/nutrition

13. If death is involved - attend funeral, visit the grave, etc.

14. Use physician and medication if appropriate

15. Hospitalize youngster if need be



4 Phases to think about:

Phase 1: First 10 minutes

Phase 2: First hour

Phase 3: Rest of the day

Phase 4: After the day is over

*Peter Blauvelt, President of the National Alliance
for Safe Schools, West Virginia*



Students have rights as survivors

1. Right to be informed.

"You've been told."

2. Right to participate in the grief process.

3. Right to do something as a group for the person who has died.

(Is it tangible and obtainable?)

“Continuing Bonds”.....

Rather than emphasizing “letting go,” the emphasis is on **negotiating and renegotiating the meaning of the loss over time.** While the death is permanent and unchanging, the process is not.

***(Continuing Bonds: New Understanding of Grief
by Dennis Klass, Phyllis Silverman, and Stven Nickmans, 1996)***



Dual Process Model

This model EMPHASIZES the back and forth between two “worlds”

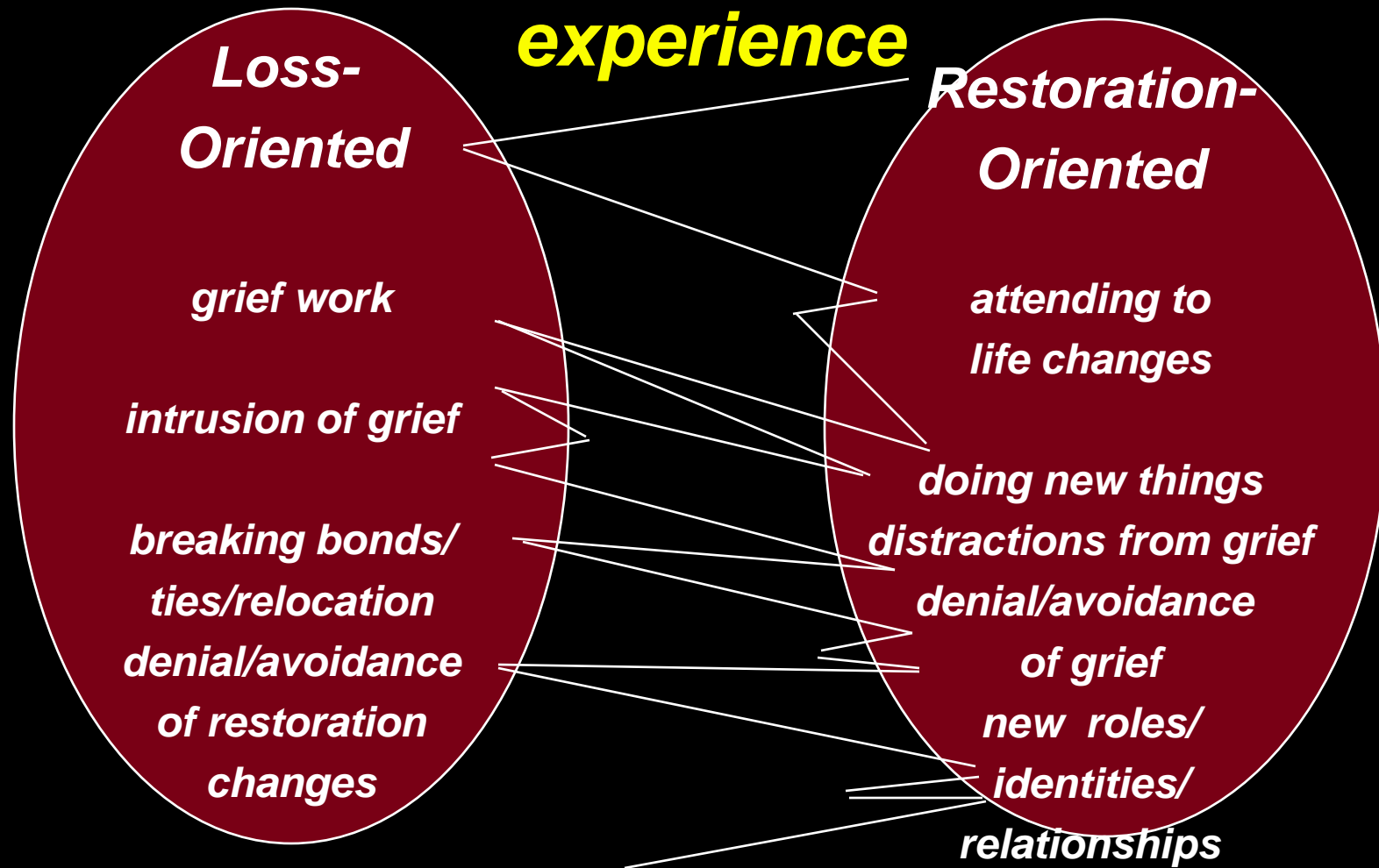
- The world in which the person and relationship once lived.***
- The world of “moving-on”of **reconstructing** ourselves and the environment around us.***

- *One world of coping with loss***
- *The second world is that of “restoration”... “efforts to adapt to the new world.”***

(Stroebe, M and Schut, Hank. (1999). “The Dual Process Model of Coping With Bereavement.” *Death Studies*, 23, 197-224.)



Everyday life experience



(Stroebe, M and Schut, Hank. (1999). "The Dual Process Model of Coping With Bereavement." *Death Studies*, 23, 197-224.)

***“Like running a marathon,
you need to stop and take
nourishment along the way.”***

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Trust your intuition...

