Dual Process Model of Grief Worksheet

Part 1. My week

After a death, people move back and forth between grieving the person who died and rebuilding daily life, and both are part of coping. Times of rest from both help too. Write down what you did each day in each column.

Day	Grieving the person *Such as crying, looking at photos, visiting the grave or talking about the person*	Rebuilding daily life *Such as new tasks, new roles, new routines or seeing people*	A break from both *Such as TV, a walk, a hobby or a meal with a friend*
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

© 2026 Sentio University. Free to copy and adapt for clinical use. Not for resale.

Part 2. Looking at the week

Which kind of activity filled most of my week?

What did I avoid, or find hardest?

What would a better balance look like next week?

What I will plan for next week

Include: one thing for grieving the person, one for rebuilding daily life and one break, with a day for each.

Kind of activity	What I will do and when
Grieving the person	
Rebuilding daily life	
A break from both	

© 2026 Sentio University. Free to copy and adapt for clinical use. Not for resale.

Clinician guide: using the dual process model

- **When it fits.** Use the worksheet with bereaved adults once you have heard the story of the loss. The dual process model sorts the stress after a death into loss-oriented and restoration-oriented kinds, and the grieving person moves between facing each kind and setting it aside, a process called oscillation (Stroebe & Schut, 1999).
- **Explain the model in plain words.** Tell the client that going back and forth between grief and daily life is a normal part of coping, and that breaks from grieving help too (Stroebe & Schut, 1999).
- **Map a typical week.** Fill in a recent week with the client, using the client's own activities in each column, then look at the balance together.
- **Plan a better balance.** Where the client seems stuck in constant grieving or in steady avoidance of it, plan a small step in the less used direction, at a pace the client chooses.
- **Watch for risk.** Ask about thoughts of suicide as part of your usual assessment, and assess further when grief stays intense and disabling over time.

Based on the dual process model of coping with bereavement described by Stroebe and Schut (1999, 2010). The layout and wording are original.

© 2026 Sentio University. Free to copy and adapt for clinical use. Not for resale.

Completed example: Ruth (a fictional client)

Ruth, 67, lost her husband, Walter, eight months ago. She filled in this week with her grief counselor, K.M., before her fifth session, on November 21, 2026. Ruth, her counselor and every detail of the case are invented.

Part 1. My week

Day	Grieving the person	Rebuilding daily life	A break from both
Mon	Looked through our wedding album for two hours.		
Tue	Cried in the car after the pharmacy.	Paid the electric bill online for the first time.	
Wed	Visited Walter's grave.		Watched a cooking show with tea.
Thu	Talked about Walter with my sister on the phone.	Went to the first meeting of the library volunteers.	
Fri	Slept in his sweater.		
Sat			Walked in the park with my neighbor.
Sun	Set his place at the table, then put it away.		

Part 2. Looking at the week

Which kind of activity filled most of my week?

Missing Walter. Most evenings I was alone with his things.

What did I avoid, or find hardest?

Calling the bank about the car. Going to church without him.

What would a better balance look like next week?

Some grieving time that I choose, like the album on Sunday afternoon, and one new thing that is mine.

What I will plan for next week

Kind of activity	What I will do and when
Grieving the person	Look at the album on Sunday afternoon and write Walter a short letter.
Rebuilding daily life	Call the bank about the car on Tuesday morning, with my sister on speaker.
A break from both	Library volunteering on Thursday and a walk with my neighbor on Saturday.

© 2026 Sentio University. Free to copy and adapt for clinical use. Not for resale.

K.M. explained the model with the columns in front of Ruth, then let her notice that most of her week sat in the first one. Ruth chose the bank call as her step toward rebuilding daily life, and K.M. asked about sleep and thoughts of suicide as part of her usual check-in.

References and further reading

Research

Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (1999). The dual process model of coping with bereavement: Rationale and description. *Death Studies, 23*(3), 197–224.

Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (2010). The dual process model of coping with bereavement: A decade on. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying, 61*(4), 273–289.

© 2026 Sentio University. Free to copy and adapt for clinical use. Not for resale.