When most people think about grief, they think about Kubler-Ross’ 5 Stages of Grief. I have been quickly enlightened since beginning my final practicum at The Tristesse Grief Center that the 5 Stages isn’t really the best model we can use when doing grief counseling. There is no sequential progression from one stage to the next and some people may never feel angry or in denial. Every person’s grief journey is unique. There are a couple models of grief that I’ve studied and learned about over the last month.

The first is Worden’s Tasks of Mourning. These are four tasks which must be completed in working through a loss. First is to accept the reality of the loss. Second is to work through the pain or grief of the loss. Third is to adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing. Fourth is to find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life. A person can be working on more than one of these tasks at a time. They may be adjusting to a life of dealing with finances or solo parenting while also taking time to intentionally feel their grief.

Another model of grief is the Dual Process Model, which includes loss-oriented activities and restoration-oriented activities. Everyone needs this back and forth between grief activities like crying, anger, dwelling on the death, and avoiding the restoration activities while also taking time to avoid the grief and adapting to the new roles required after a death. Stroebe and Schut wanted to identify something different than a
linear stage model. A person will oscillate between these two types of activities. After all, everyone needs a break from their grieving and they don't need to feel guilty for doing so.

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