The efficacy of a brief e-mail based grief intervention

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The primary objective of this study is to investigate the short and long term effect of the writing intervention (titled RELIEF) on the physical and mental health of persons who have been bereaved by the death of a close loved one and to see whether...

Ethical review	Approved WMO
Status	Recruitment stopped
Health condition type	Other condition
Study type	Interventional

Summary

ID

NL-OMON30056

Source
ToetsingOnline

Brief title
RELIEF

Condition

- Other condition

Synonym
n.v.t.

Health condition

Aan het onderzoek nemen alleen gezonde proefpersonen deel. Heeft mogelijk relevantie voor de behandeling van gecompliceerde rouw.

Research involving
Human

Sponsors and support

Primary sponsor: Universiteit Utrecht
Source(s) of monetary or material Support: Ministerie van OC&W

Intervention

Keyword: attachment style, grief intervention, online therapy

Outcome measures

Primary outcome

Attachment style and the amount of grief, depression, positive emotions, and physical symptoms experienced by subjects.

Secondary outcome

The extent in which subjects engage in avoidance behaviours and endorse negative cognitions.

Study description

Background summary

This project is designed to address a paradox: Why has the Pennebaker writing paradigm not been beneficial in bereavement (one of the most stressful of experiences), when it is so effective for coming to terms with other seemingly less-impactful life events? Although Pennebaker down-plays the importance of individual differences in general, our reasoning is that these are particularly critical in bereavement. Drawing on attachment theory, we hypothesize that securely-attached individuals will benefit less from writing about the loss of their loved one than insecurely-attached bereaved persons. To increase the power of the writing paradigm specifically for the bereaved, we have designed five structured writing assignments each containing different instructions. Theoretical importance lies in empirical examination of a previously non-researched question and in integration of two theoretical perspectives: the writing paradigm and attachment theory. Societal importance lies in the potential to apply the findings to guide the planning of intervention for the bereaved, by targeting only those individuals who will benefit from such a manipulation.

Study objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the short and long term effect of the writing intervention (titled RELIEF) on the physical and mental health of persons who have been bereaved by the death of a close loved one and to see whether the efficacy is dependent on the attachment style of the person receiving the intervention. The secondary objective of this study is to investigate the mechanism by which RELIEF reaches its effect.

Study design

The study has a mixed within and between subjects design: 2 (writing intervention/no intervention) x 3 (data collection points). Participants will be randomly assigned to either the writing intervention or no intervention condition.

Intervention

RELIEF consists of a list of general guidelines for writing and five different structured writing assignments that are sent to participants by email.

Study burden and risks

Participants assigned to the writing intervention condition will spend approximately 2* hours on RELIEF and another 2* hours filling out questionnaires totaling 5 hours. Participants assigned to the no intervention condition will spend approximately 2* hours filling out questionnaires. Based on a pilot study, up to date scientific research and extensive clinical and research experience with bereaved people we conclude that participating in this study carries no known or anticipated risks to participants. Both engaging in RELIEF and filling out questionnaires might lead to some temporary negative feelings. There are no direct benefits to participants.

Contacts

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Trial sites

Listed location countries

Netherlands

Eligibility criteria

Age
Adults (18-64 years)
Elderly (65 years and older)

Inclusion criteria

(1) age 18 years or older
(2) native English speaker
(3) having experienced the death of a partner, parent, child or sibling and being significantly distressed by this
(4) access to computer and Internet facilities
(5) in possession of a valid e-mail address

Exclusion criteria

(currently) suffering from schizophrenia, psychotic episodes, suicidal thoughts or severe depression

Study design

Design

Study type:	Interventional
Intervention model:	Parallel

Allocation:	Randomized controlled trial
Masking:	Open (masking not used)

Primary purpose: Prevention

Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status:	Recruitment stopped
Start date (anticipated):	26-09-2006
Enrollment:	1
Type:	Actual

Ethics review

Approved WMO Date:	12-09-2006
Application type:	First submission
Review commission:	METIGG: Medisch Ethische Toetsingscommissie Instellingen Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg (Utrecht)

Approved WMO Date:	07-12-2006
Application type:	Amendment
Review commission:	METIGG: Medisch Ethische Toetsingscommissie Instellingen Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg (Utrecht)

Study registrations

Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL11633.097.06