



A GUIDED INTERNET-BASED SELF-HELP PROGRAMME FOR BEREAVED OLDER ADULTS

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THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Internet-based self-help interventions have proved beneficial effects on a broad range of disorders including Complicated Grief Disorders (CGD). However, no self-help intervention has been implemented for milder grief symptoms not fulfilling the criteria of a CGD after marital bereavement and after a separation/divorce in older adults.



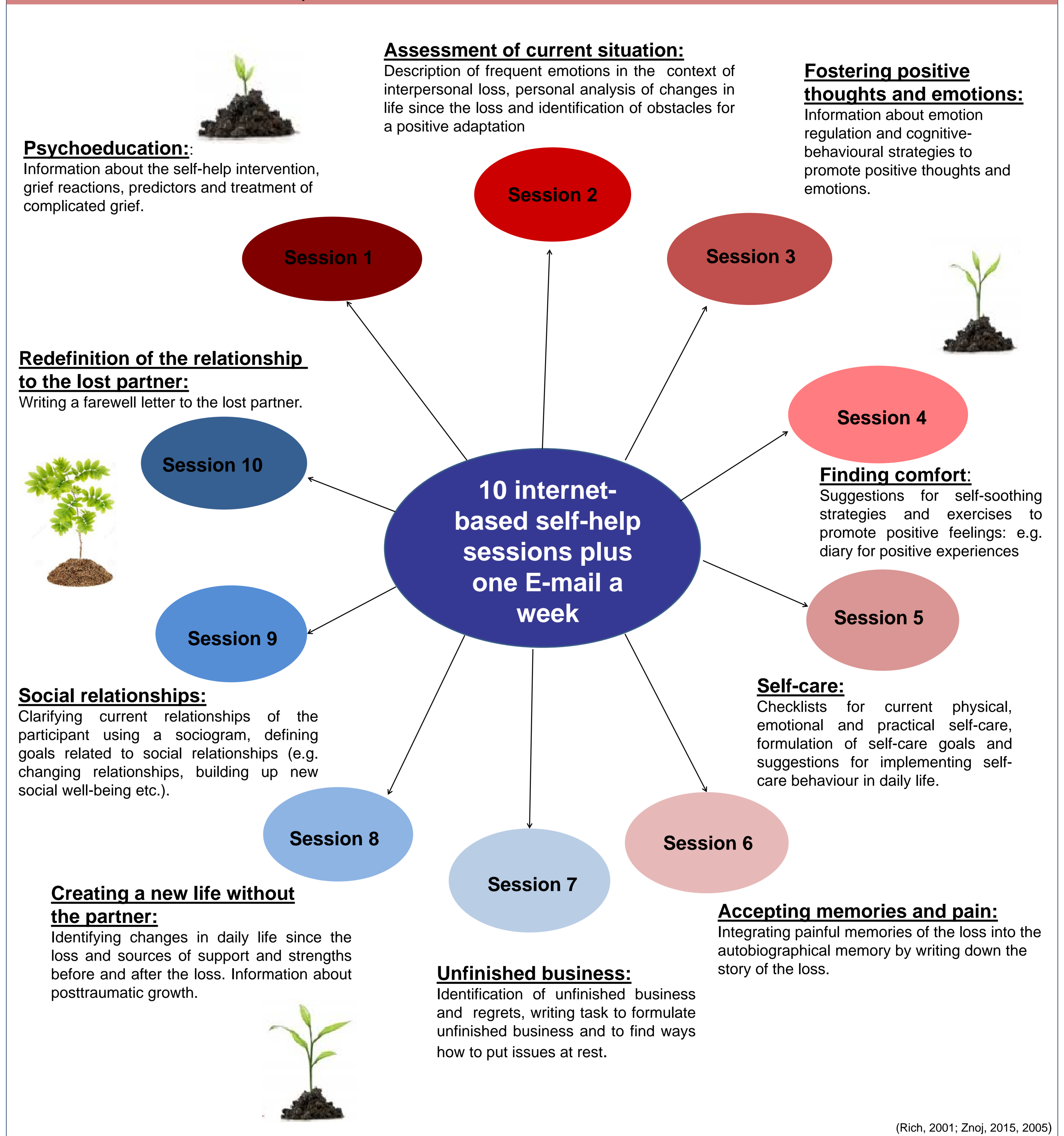
The present research
Based on the dual process model of coping with bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 1999), the two-track model (Rubin, 1981), and cognitive-behavioural models of emotion regulation, we developed a randomised guided internet-based self-help intervention for coping with prolonged grief symptoms after marital bereavement or separation/divorce (LIVES IP 212).

Aims

1. Evaluation of the efficacy of the intervention compared to a waiting-control group.
2. Analyzing predictors, moderators and mediators of the outcome in order to improve the intervention, i.e. type of loss, age, psychopathological distress at baseline.

INTERVENTION

The main components of this self-help intervention are ten text-based sessions with several exercises and writing tasks, as well as a supportive E-Mail a week. Participants are encouraged to work through one session a week and complete the exercises. One session takes about 60 minutes.



VARIABLES / INSTRUMENTS

Primary Outcomes:

Grief symptoms: Texas Revised Inventory of Grief-Deutsch (TRIG-D), a widely used 16-item measure to assess the severity of grief symptoms (Znoj, 2008); **Psychological distress:** Brief Symptom Inventory (Franke, 2000).

Secondary Outcomes:

Depressive Symptoms: German version of the Beck Depressions Inventory (Hautzinger, Kühne & Keller, 2006); **Satisfaction with life:** (Diener et al., 1985; Schumacher, 2003); **Embitterment:** Verbitterungsfragebogen Kurzversion (Znoj & Schnyder, 2014); as well as session-related outcomes and evaluation of single sessions and the programme in general.

PERSPECTIVE

- By the end of 2016, we aim at recruiting 220 participants who suffer from marital bereavement or separation/divorce.
- Effects of intervention will be assessed as changes from baseline to the post (12 weeks) and follow-up measures (24 weeks and 6 months later). Stability of the effects will be assessed as changes from the post measures to the follow-up measures.
- We expect that participants will show decreased grief symptoms after the online-intervention but not after the control condition and that the outcomes remain stable during the 6 months follow up.
- Exploratory analyses will compare the outcome for bereaved and divorced participants and analyse further moderators and mediators using Structural Equation Modelling.