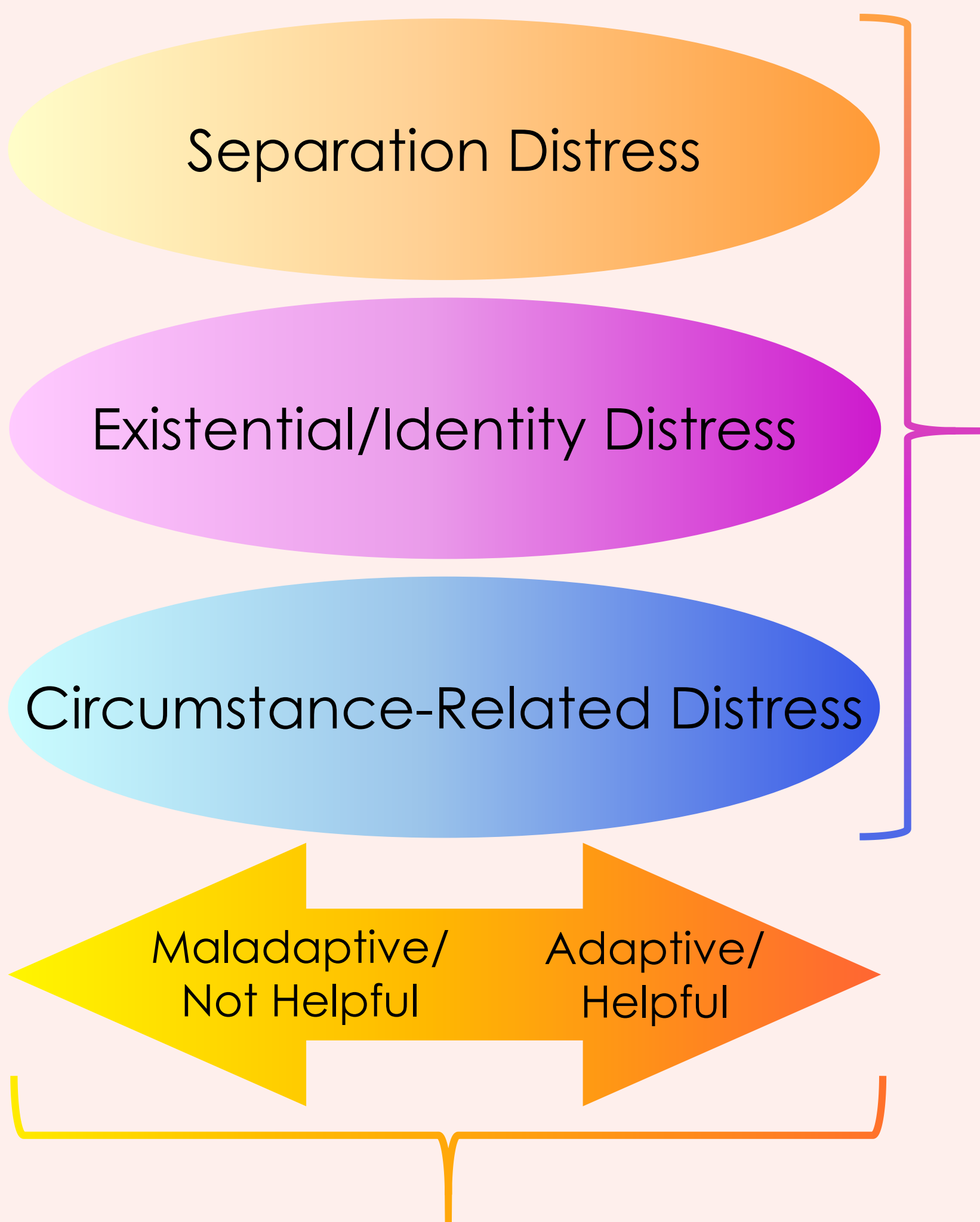


Understanding Multidimensional Grief Theory

A Model for Conceptualizing Children's Grief Reactions

Multidimensional Grief Model
(Adapted with permission from Layne et al., 2019*)



The model is multidimensional along the vertical axis

- ❑ Children's grief reactions typically fall within three conceptual domains
- ❑ After a death, children often grapple with a range of bereavement-related challenges.
- ❑ Grief reactions can vary in their helpfulness in facilitating adaptive adjustment to death

The model is multidimensional along the horizontal axis

- ❑ Grief is generally a natural response to the death of a loved one
- ❑ Unlike other psychological issues, there is such a thing as adaptive grief, which can make it challenging to identify bereaved youth who are in need of intervention

*Layne, C. M., Kaplow, J. B., Oosterhoff, B., & Hill, R. (2019, June 3). *Developmental Perspectives on DSM-5-TR Prolonged Grief Disorder Criteria: Proposals for Improvement*. Invited presentation at the Workshop on Developing Criteria for a Disorder of Pathological Grieving for DSM 5-TR. Hosted by the American Psychiatric Association, New York City (Paul Applebaum, M.D., Chair).

Understanding Multidimensional Grief Theory

Exploring Each Dimension

Separation Distress

"I miss my mom so much it hurts my heart."

- Missing the person who died, longing for their return
- Most easily recognized grief reaction
- Common to all ages and all manners of death
- Can lead to clinically significant distress



Existential/Identity Distress

"I don't know how I'm going to get through life without my dad."

- Diminished sense of life meaning, purpose, or identity
- More common among adolescents compared to children.
- Less understood or recognized as Separation Distress
- Can appear as apathy, aimlessness, resignation, nihilism, or despair
- Can manifest as feeling isolated or "different" from other kids



Circumstance-Related Distress

"Every time I see a photo of my brother, all I can think about is the night he got killed and how I wish I could have stopped it."

- Distress over how the person died
- More likely to arise after traumatic or tragic deaths
- Can also arise in response to anticipated deaths involving the slow, progressive deterioration of a loved one's physical health

