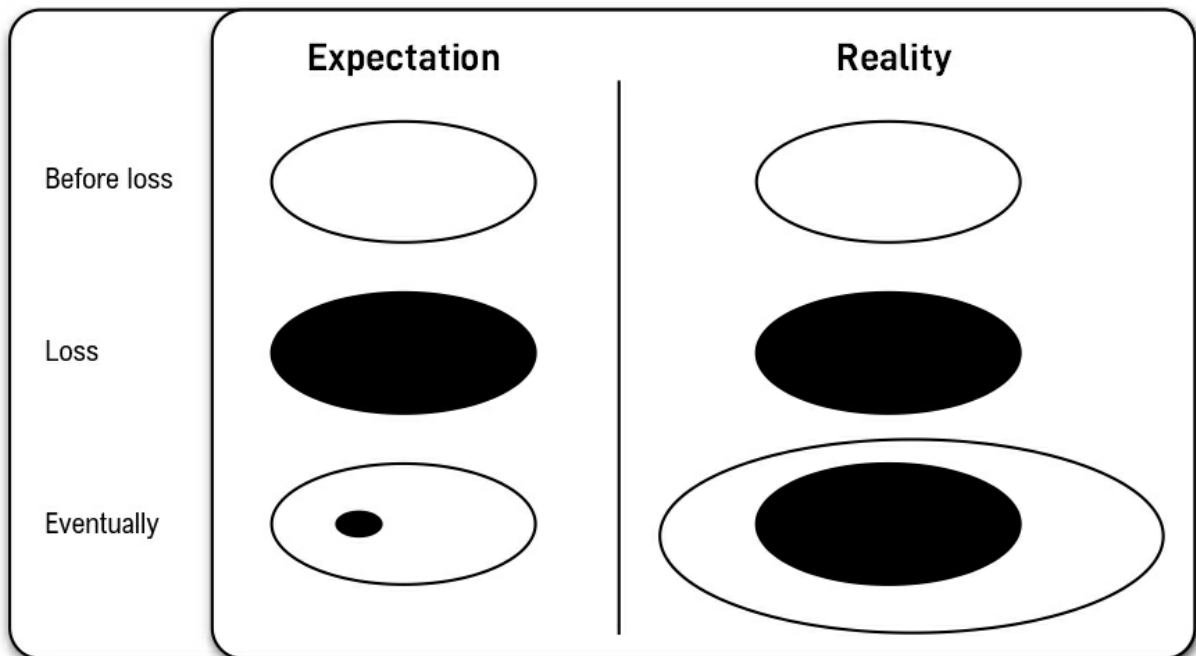


Growing Around Grief

Grief models have been created by those working with the bereaved and commonalities and patterns are often recognised. However, as we are all unique, there can never be a one-size-fits-all model, and certainly there is not any pressure to conform to any model of grief theory. But sometimes it can help to recognise yourself within a loose framework, largely to know that your grief is normal and that a healthy response to grief and healing often takes a particular journey. Understanding grief more completely can help you, it is not to hinder you with doubts of not “grieving properly.”



Lois Tonkin



Draw a circle that represents you, your life and all that you are experiencing right now. Shade an inner circle to represent your grief. You may find the outer circle is almost entirely shaded which is unsurprising as your grief may be all-consuming and take up most of your thoughts.

As time passes, it's not that the shaded area (your grief) grows smaller but rather the outer circle begins to grow bigger hence this model of grief being referred to as the fried egg model! The white of the egg represents your life and the yolk represents your grief.

This theory (devised by Dr Lois Tonkin) suggests that over time your grief may stay the same but your life will begin to grow around it as you adjust to the loss and are able to gradually experience moments when it may not feel quite so all-consuming. As these moments may become more frequent, so the outer circle can grow a little bigger. Hopefully, in time the outer circle will be much larger but may still have the same size shaded area but it means that your grief is not as dominant as it was first felt.

We know that grief does not disappear and often remains tucked away within us or it may even grow a little bigger at difficult or challenging times in your life.

Tonkin's model of grief is fully accepting that time is not always a healer and that we do not 'move on' from grief or that we can 'have closure' towards someone we have truly loved, but by recognising and embracing this concept that our grief may not always feel this painful, we can allow our lives instead to grow around it.

