

TWO MODELS OF GRIEF

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Most people associate grief with when a person dies, but grief can be felt about many things. You can grieve about your own life before cancer, you can grieve relationships or friendships that don't last, or that have changed, you can grieve about the parenting milestones you have missed, or the dream you had about how you were going to parent. These can be thought of as living losses.

These grief models can provide an easy visual understanding of how grief can feel. This can often be comforting; make you feel less alone, and be a helpful guide during confusing and challenging times.

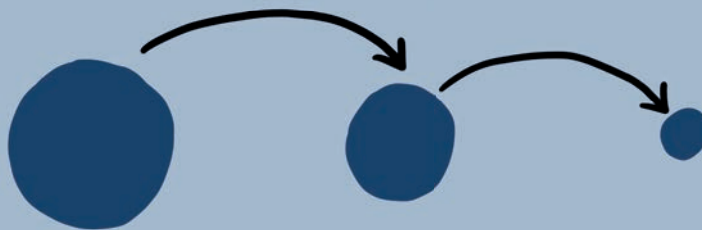
It might be helpful to describe these models to your children to help them visualise and acknowledge their grief and losses.

1. GROWING AROUND GRIEF (Tonkin, 1996)

The model demonstrates that life grows around grief, it stays the same and you grow around it. It dispels the notion that 'you get over grief' and that the grief gets smaller over time.

EXPECTATION

Grief lessens over time



REALITY

Life grows around grief



2. DUAL PROCESSING or what we like to call 'Swinging between two places'

There is a place where you are sad, angry, withdrawn and are experiencing the feelings of grief. There is another place where regrowth and life building, or life simply carrying on, happens.

You can swing between these two places as much you want. You might visit the grief place several times in a day and then hop over to the place for life 'moving forward' for a bit.

Important to remember that you don't get stuck on one side for too long. You have to feel it to heal it which means you have to spend some time feeling the grief, and equally you have to spend some time feeling the regrowth of life or that life is moving forward.

