



Grief and the Holidays

Grief is difficult any time of the year, but the holidays can be especially painful for some people. Listed below are some suggestions that you may find helpful in coping with the holidays without your loved one:

1. Normalize your feelings. Know that the sadness, the anger, the helplessness, or whatever you are feeling is normal. Give yourself permission to grieve. When people ask you, “How are you doing?” you have the right to answer them honestly if you choose to do so.
2. Ask yourself, “What do I want to do this year?” You may find it helpful to try to keep things as “normal” as possible for the sake of continuity. What are your traditions around the special seasons? Or, if it is too great a burden this year, give yourself permission to do something different or start a new tradition.
3. If at all possible, surround yourself with family and people who care. Probably, the hardest thing to do is to be alone.
4. Remember the person who has died.
 - Display a picture or other special memorabilia.
 - Include memories of the person in your conversation.
 - Light a special memory candle.
 - Use a Holiday Memorial Wreath.
 - Donate to charity in your loved ones memory.
 - Attend a special service of remembrance.
 - Write your loved one a letter. Share your thoughts with family if you feel comfortable in doing so.
 - Prepare your loved one’s favorite food in his/her memory.
 - Be creative in ways to remember your loved one.
5. Get plenty of rest and eat appropriately. Grief can be tiring work, especially during the holidays. Exercising can also help.
6. Seek out the professional support from a pastor/priest or other counselor if necessary.
7. Do not give in to accommodate others if you are not feeling up to it.
8. Do something special for yourself.
9. Tap into your spiritual resources.
10. Accept the gift of peace. Remember this about peace, “It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work, it means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.” Unknown author