

Grieving During the Holidays

The holidays can be difficult for those who have lost loved ones. There is joy to be found, but those who are grieving must make a conscious effort to find it. Most find that it helps to have a holiday plan and to adjust some of the family traditions. Here are some suggestions:

- Take care of yourself: eat right, schedule some time for exercise and get plenty of rest.
- Do your holiday shopping early to eliminate unnecessary stress.
- Decide what you can comfortably handle, and let your family, friends and relatives know your needs.
- If you find things are not going well, set limits and only do the things that are most important to you.
- Plan your holidays ahead of time. Having a schedule of activities relieves some tension and allows you to look forward to the activities.
- Do not hesitate to make changes in your holiday traditions; it can make things less painful.
- Start a new tradition: discard an old recipe and try a new one, change the time you open your presents, eat your holiday meal at someone else's home, etc.
- Try to connect with the people you enjoy being around. This year, you may opt to join them via video chat or just over a phone call, but the connection is still important.
- If you feel the need to cry, remember tears are an honest expression of love and emotion.
- If the thought of sending holiday cards is too painful, give yourself permission not to send them.
- Include the person who died in your conversations with your family and friends when you discuss past holidays.