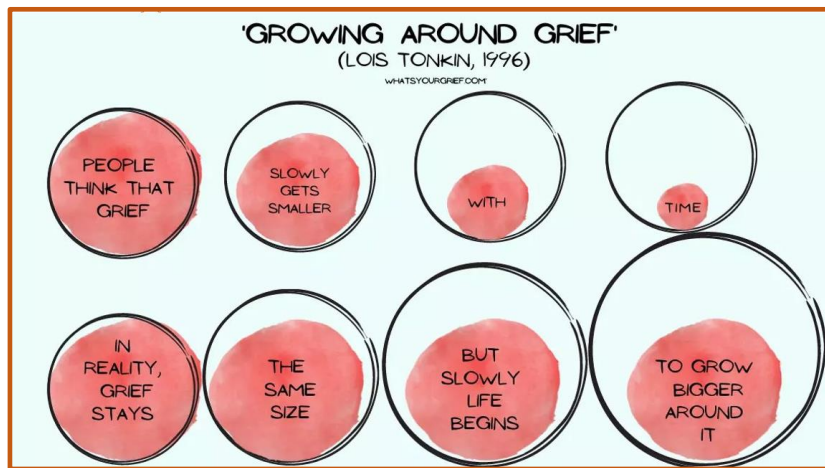


Holiday Survival Guide: First Holiday without a Loved One

Ahh the holidays, most people are looking forward to gathering with friends or family, traveling to different destinations or have extravagant staycation plans. However, every year, there is a family or a person who is celebrating differently this year, due to losing a loved one.

For the people who have lost a loved one this year, it will not be easy. It will be something they are working through that could vary in symptoms. Grief is not linear; therefore, it is not predictable how an individual will experience grief. Someone who is grieving can be happy one moment and sobbing the next moment. There is no "guide" to grief, other than knowing that through healing the whole person, we can make room in our lives for grief.

The picture below compares how most people think of grief (top row) and how grief therapists view grief (bottom row).



It is a good time to mention that grief comes in many forms, beyond someone passing away. For example, some people may be grieving a relationship, and it may be hard for that person to see other couples in the first month or so after the relationship, but after the individual starts having new hobbies, new friends and new life routines, it becomes easier to see couples and eventually "be happy for them." This is a good example of why we cannot predict when the grieving feelings will pass. Everyone has a different schedule of finding the help they need (like therapy or grief groups), accepting the loss of the individual and learning to live in a world without their loved ones. Like the graphic above, the grief does not get smaller, our world gets bigger through therapy.

Here are some great tips from our grief counselors to help you and/or your family work through this holiday season for the first time without your loved one:

- **“We need time.”** Take your time with grief, this is a major life change, and you need time to process moving through the different stages of grief – the initial shock, the anger, the disbelief, the sadness, whatever feelings you are having during this time are normal. Please seek professional help after three months if the grieving does not alleviate a little.
- **“We need to remember.”** Memorialize your loved one in any way that suits you. Some people may set a place at the holiday table, share stories from the person’s life, give gifts to the family that memorialize the individual (personalized snow globes, framed pictures, personal items made into decorations, etc.).
- **“We need Self Care.”** Yes, your therapist/counselors’ favorite words, self-care. What is it? How do we achieve it? The answer is different for everyone. However, thinking about the different areas of your life, you can pick one action item from each area of your life to incorporate self-care. For example, financial self-care is vital to total well-being, just as important as physical self-care is. Self-care includes calling an old friend to catch up, listening to your favorite song and getting lost in the music, trying something new – or learning something new. Self-care is vast and all of it has one thing in common – listening to your individual needs and giving yourself the respect, you deserve.

From all of us here at Ulliance, we hope you have a healthy and happy holiday. If you or someone you know is struggling this holiday season, please encourage them to call our 24/7 hotline for immediate assistance for a crisis, or to set up an appointment with one of our counselors. We are glad you are here!

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your
Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short-term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we’re here to help **800.448.8326**