

Grieving During the Holidays

The holidays can be difficult for those who have lost loved ones, especially this year, when many are also feeling overwhelmed by global and national events. 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.