

Holiday Tips for Coping with Grief

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is the natural, human, and often gut-wrenching experience of having lost someone we loved deeply. This beloved person was here with us, and they no longer are. That truth can be overwhelming and almost too big to put into words. However, there are things to bear in mind that can help us on this journey. There are also options for support. While grieving can often be lonely, one does not have to grieve alone.

Please remember grief is a normal and natural reaction to loss, produces physical and emotional responses, and is an unique and individual journey for each of us.

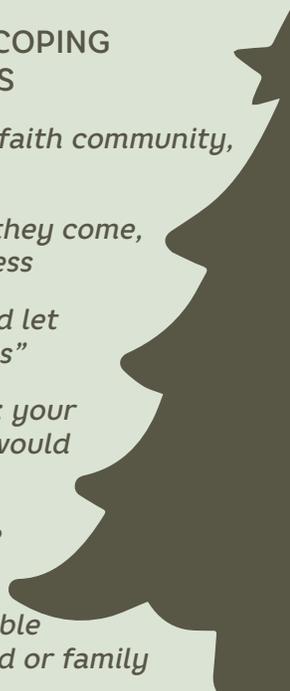
GRIEVING AT THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays can be exceptionally difficult. They are fraught with memories, traditions, gatherings, expectations, and sensory triggers. This may be the time to pull back, or to give yourself permission to do things differently. Remember, there is no wrong way to grieve, there is just the best way for you to manage.



IDEAS AND STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH GRIEF AT THE HOLIDAYS

- Reach out to friends, family, a faith community, or professionals for support
- Acknowledge your feelings as they come, there is no shame in your sadness
- Be gentle with yourself, try and let go of the “shoulds” and “oughts”
- Don’t be afraid to talk about it; your grief, your feelings, what you would like to happen
- Embrace the bittersweet of the moment
- Try and plan something enjoyable you can do with a trusted friend or family



CONSIDER CREATING NEW RITUALS OR CHANGING OLD ONES

- Have your holiday meal at a different time or place
- Ask someone to help or take over hosting
- Skip the Christmas cards, or send a New Year’s note
- Light a special memorial candle in honor of your loved one
- Prepare a favorite dish or dessert in their memory
- Create an ornament or wreath in their honor
- Make a holiday “memory box” for your loved one.
- Consider doing service in your loved one’s honor

REMEMBER SELF-CARE

- Listen to your body and remember your needs
- Be mindful of nutrition, sleep, exercise and deep breathing
- Plan ahead so you have something comforting to do the day of the holiday. Sometimes anticipating the day ends up being the worst part.
- Lower expectations of yourself
- Let others know what would be helpful
- Don’t be afraid to laugh or enjoy yourself. Don’t judge yourself if you cry or feel overwhelmed. Feelings aren’t good or bad, they’re just feelings and they are essential to the task of grieving.