

Coping With Grief During the Holidays

Holidays represent special moments shared with our deceased loved ones, so it's natural to grieve more during the first few holidays after a death.

During the holidays, many families feel they don't have permission to talk about their grief and loss, try not to notice that their special person isn't there, and try not to acknowledge their pain and loss and sadness.

Expressing sad or angry feelings can enrich your holidays and help you feel the joy of the season.

To Help You Deal With Grief During the Holiday Season

1. Don't try to hide or block bad moments, and don't let anyone else tell you what you should or shouldn't be doing. Grief is natural. Give yourself permission to grieve as much as you want, to feel whatever you feel, and to express it any way you need to.
2. Know that nothing you can do in the grieving process is wrong.
 - Set a place for that special person, talk about him or her, and feel sad and cry if you need to for as long as you need to.
 - Bring the loved one's favorite food to a meal. Mention his/her name in the blessing, or propose a toast to the person's memory.
 - Share memories about the person who died. Make a photo album or memory book about the loved one and share it.
3. If you have children, let them know that it's ok to cry and to feel sad. Encourage children to draw pictures and create gifts inspired by their memories of the deceased to give to others.
4. If a family tradition is too painful, change it. If the tradition is comforting, keep it.
5. Find a support group where you can spend time with people who have had a similar experience. Hospitals, churches, United Way agencies, and crisis hotlines can provide information about support groups in your area.
6. Take care of yourself. Exercise regularly, eat right, get plenty of rest, take time for yourself, and treat yourself to things you enjoy.
7. As you become aware of your needs, let family and friends know what they can do to help. Ask others to sit with you or to let you cry and talk about your loved one.