

## TIPS FOR HANDLING THE HOLIDAYS WHEN GRIEVING

1. DECIDE WHAT YOU CAN HANDLE COMFORTABLY AND LET FAMILY AND FRIENDS KNOW. Can I handle the responsibility of the family dinner, etc. or shall I ask someone else to do it? Do I want to talk about my loved one or not? Shall I stay here for the holidays or go to a completely different environment?
2. MAKE SOME CHANGES IF THEY FEEL COMFORTABLE FOR YOU. Open presents Christmas Eve instead of Christmas morning. Vary the timing of gift giving. Have dinner at a different time or place. Let the children take over decorating the house, the tree, baking and food preparation, etc.
3. RE-EXAMINE YOUR PRIORITIES: GREETING CARDS, HOLIDAY BAKING, DECORATING, PUTTING UP A TREE, FAMILY DINNER, ETC. Do I really enjoy doing this? Is this a task that can be shared?
4. CONSIDER DOING SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR SOMEONE ELSE. Donate a gift in the memory of your loved one. Donate money you would have spent on your loved one as a gift to charity. Adopt a needy family for the holidays. Invite a guest (foreign student, senior citizen) to share festivities.
5. RECOGNIZE YOUR LOVED ONE'S PRESENCE IN THE FAMILY. Burn a special candle to quietly include your loved one. Hang a stocking for your loved one in which people can put notes with their thoughts or feelings. Listen to music especially like by the deceased. Look at photographs.
6. IF YOU DECIDE TO DO HOLIDAY SHOPPING, MAKE A LIST AHEAD OF TIME AND KEEP IT HANDY FOR A GOOD DAY, OR SHOP ONLINE OR THROUGH CATALOGS.
7. OBSERVE THE HOLIDAYS IN WAYS WHICH ARE COMFORTABLE FOR YOU. There is no right or wrong way of handling holidays. Once you've decided how to observe the time, let others know.
8. TRY TO GET ENOUGH REST – HOLIDAYS CAN BE EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY DRAINING.
9. ALLOW YOURSELF TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS. Holidays often magnify feelings of loss. It is natural to feel sadness. Share concerns, apprehensions, feelings with a friend. The need for support is often greater during holidays.
10. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE EXPERIENCE OF MANY BEREAVED PERSONS IS THAT THEY DO COME TO ENJOY HOLIDAYS AGAIN. THERE WILL BE OTHER HOLIDAY SEASONS TO CELEBRATE.
11. DON'T BE AFRAID TO HAVE FUN. Laughter and joy are not disrespectful. Give yourself and your family members' permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holidays.