



## Tips for Coping with Grief during the Holidays

Holiday activities and preparations can be stressful under the very best of circumstances and are understandably more difficult and challenging when you are also coping with the loss of a loved one. Here are a few simple and, hopefully, helpful tips that may make the holidays easier for you.

- **Give yourself permission to grieve.**  
Accept yourself wherever you are in the grief process. Tears, loneliness, and sadness are natural reactions to the loss of a loved one. Likewise, feelings of joy and happiness will not dishonor or betray your loved one.
- **Nurture yourself.**  
Make sure you get sufficient rest, eat well, and exercise. Also, try to participate in activities that nurture and comfort your spirit.
- **Honor and remember your loved one.**  
Ask family members and friends to share favorite holiday stories about your loved one, make a special ornament or memorial in his or her honor, or light a candle in his or her memory during a holiday meal. Just remember, the sentiment is key and the possibilities are endless.
- **Consider volunteering to help others in need.**  
Contributing your time and support will help others and serve as a distraction from the pain. There are a number of charitable organizations that would benefit from your assistance, particularly during the holiday season.
- **Set priorities and plan ahead.**  
Decide what you think you can handle and what may be too difficult. Share your plans with family and friends and don't be afraid to ask for help with holiday tasks and errands. Give yourself permission to say "no thank you" to social invitations that you feel will be too difficult or painful.
- **Consider deviating from holiday traditions.**  
If it is too difficult to maintain holiday traditions, establish new ones. For example: open gifts at a different time of day; have dinner at a different location; attend holiday worship at an alternate venue.
- **Cancel plans, when needed.**  
If you make a commitment and have difficulty following through, be kind to yourself and cancel the plans. It's okay to change your mind.
- **Surround yourself with supportive people.**  
Seek companionship with people who accept you for who you are and what you are feeling.
- **Seek bereavement assistance.**  
Don't be afraid to ask for help. Hospice of Green Country bereavement staff are available for phone consultations at 918-747-2273. We will gladly offer a listening ear and suggest other resources that may be helpful.