

Coping with Grief through the Holidays

Christmas can be the best time of the year. Decorations, foods, and parties can all be fun.

One of the most difficult things anyone can experience during Christmas, and any holiday or celebration is the loss of a loved one. Whether it is a spouse, parent, child sibling or friend, this pain cannot be measured. It may always be difficult no matter how long ago the loss is and it will never quiet be the same. While shoppers are hustling and bustling, many people are visiting terminally ill family members in nursing homes and hospitals, there is a strain and it is difficult to be happy and jolly.

If the loss of a loved one happens within the holiday season, this is most likely a season of grieving. Here are some suggestions for the person and those who love them, to cope with the sorrow this time of year.

Be Yourself. It is okay to be me. Do what you need to do in order to manage your grief. It is okay not to decorate or celebrate or give gifts. You may need to make a change to family traditions such as take a trip. If you normally entertain, it is okay to not as this may be more than you can handle.

Out of love for yourself and others, decide what you can and cannot do. Do not feel you have to make apologies.

Take care of yourself. Don't do something because you feel obligated. You may have been invited to a party which you feel you should attend. It could be a mistake as you may not be emotionally prepared.

Face your feelings; express your grief, and come to terms how you feel. Assure yourself that you will not always experience this pain.

Pay close attention to your health. Eat properly and exercise. Also rest and sleep is important.

Get organized. Create your own plan based on your own situation will help you get organized and bring structure. Planning and preparing will reduce stress and anxiety.

Make necessary choices. If shopping is more than you can handle, shopping by phone, internet, gift cards or even no gifts at all may be helpful. Only do as much as you feel like.

Allow others to help. Those you care about you will be glad to help with shopping, cleaning, decorating, cooking and other responsibilities, if you ask. We who are wise ask for help and receive help because we are not super human.

Keep live simple. This is good advice for everyday living. But it is especially important for those who are living through the holidays following the loss of a loved one. Even basic chores can deplete our energy. Thus take time to keep things simple.

Write a letter to your deceased loved one. You may have a little trouble at first, but this can be a valuable and therapeutic activity that will give you an opportunity to express all your memories and feelings whether negative or positive. It can be a means of expressing unsaid wishes you had.

Share your feelings. It is important to talk out our grief with someone who will listen. This may be a trusted friend, a preacher or counselor. Venting and verbalizing your feelings will help release some of the depression and anxiety.

Attend a grief support group. In this setting you surround yourself with those who are experiencing losses. There are several grief support groups in this area. Some of the local churches and counseling centers offer groups.

Learn about grief. Read materials written by professionals who specialize in this field. Discuss the matter with those who have experienced it.

Turn to God. Many bereaved individuals have shared how in leaning on God during their deepest sorrow. Through him there is power that is greater than our problems and grief.