

Practical Tips for Coping with Grief During the Holidays

For many, the holiday season is a time for celebration and family gatherings. For those struggling with the death of a loved one, holiday traditions, images and memories can be painful reminders that intensify feelings of sadness and loneliness.

Here are some tips that may help you, your family or a friend cope with grief during this season of celebration, peace, joy and hope.

- Recognize that the holidays may not be the same and expect to feel some pain.
- Try not to isolate yourself. Talk with family members and friends about your feelings and share stories about your loved one.
- Give yourself permission to do what feels comfortable, whether that is following family traditions or modifying and making new traditions.
- Let others help you and try not to take on any additional stress.
- Include others who are grieving in your holiday plans.
- Attend a memorial event or gather your family and friends for a special memorial to remember your loved one and the contributions he/she made to your life.
- If you know someone who is grieving during the holidays, let them know you care and offer a listening ear. They need to be remembered, and they need to know their loved ones are remembered, too. Be supportive of the way they choose to celebrate the holidays and offer to help them prepare.
- Open the windows. Studies have proven that direct sunlight can help reduce depression often associated with grief and loss.
- Exercise. Physical activity has proven to be a way to reduce the effects of grief and loss associated with depression.
- Don't neglect having a good diet. Depression often leads us to make unhealthy dietary choices. Remember, it's important to maintain a healthy balanced diet. Watch things like sodium, sugar, and foods high in

saturated fats. Getting sick while dealing with grief and loss can add insult to injury.

- Don't be afraid to ask your physician for medication that could be a short-term help with fighting depression.

For more information about bereavement and the services InFINITY Care of Tulsa offers those who are grieving, click on the bereavement link under "Services" in the left navigation bar.

More information about coping with grief during the holidays is also available from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's Web site, www.caringinfo.org, or by calling the HelpLine at 1-800-658-8898.

Source: *National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization*