

In This Together... Learn. Share. Laugh.

Coping Strategies to Help During the Holidays

- ❖ Do something for others: give a gift in honor of someone you care about; adopt a needy family for the holidays; invite a guest who would otherwise be alone.
- ❖ Create a “symbolic presence” of the loved one you are missing... perhaps a bouquet of flowers, a candle, or a special handmade decoration.
- ❖ Journal: write your feelings or memories
- ❖ Write a letter to the one who died, expressing your thoughts and feelings.
- ❖ Have a “Family Circle” or “Talking Circle” time to share memories and stories.
- ❖ Reach out! Others often do not know what to say or do in the face of your family’s pain.

Children and the Holidays

Children express grief differently than adults. It is sometimes difficult to tell that they are grieving. Often, children will hide feelings from a parent to protect the parent. It is difficult for a child to hold intense feelings for very long. Children often fluctuate between playing with abandonment and hidden or open tears.

It is okay for your children to know that you are sad. If you are able to talk with them about the loss, acknowledge that the holidays hold special memories that can bring about many feelings. Invite them to talk with you. If you are too overwhelmed, ask other family members to be available for the children.

Is there something special that the deceased did for your child(ren) each year? Is it something that you or someone else can do? What “gifts” or traditions did your loved one leave that your family can keep?

Encourage your children to participate in helping others during the holidays. Thoughtful, planned, careful giving can contribute to a sense of control that is so often lost when a loved one dies.

Check for grief support groups in your area. They are usually offered at nominal or no cost. Hospices and hospitals sometimes offer these. Check for children’s grief support programs at www.dougy.org.

www.childgrief.org

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