

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

How to Help Ourselves through the Holidays

In our lives there are many holidays or “special days,” such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, wedding, and Easter, to name a few. There are all difficult days for the bereaved, but for many the most difficult holiday of the year is Christmas. This day, more than any other, means “family” and we are acutely aware of the void in our life. Listed below are some **ideas** and **suggestions** that others have found helpful in coping with the holiday season. Choose the ones that will help you.

- ❖ **Family get-togethers may be extremely difficult.** Be honest about your feelings. Sit down with your family and decide what you want to do for the holiday season. Don't set expectations too high for yourself or of the day. If you wish things to be the same, you are going to be disappointed. Do things a little differently.
- ❖ **There is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays.** Some may wish to follow family traditions, while others may choose to change.
- ❖ **Be careful of “should”.** It is better to do what is most helpful for you and your family. If a situation looks especially difficult over the holidays, give yourself permission to abstain.
- ❖ **Set limitations.** Realize it isn't going to be easy. Do the things that are very special and/or important to you. Do the best you can.
- ❖ **Once you have made a decision on the role you and your family will play during the holidays, let relatives and friends know.** You need not apologize for these decisions. This is a time for your healing.
- ❖ **Baking and cleaning the house can get out of proportion.** If these chores are enjoyable, go ahead, but not to the point that it is tiring. Either buy baked goods or go without this year.
- ❖ **Emotionally, physically and psychologically, it is draining.** You need every bit of strength. Try to get enough rest.
- ❖ **How do we answer “Happy Holidays?”** You may say, “I'll try” or “Best Wishes to you.” You think of many answers that you don't say.
- ❖ **If shopping seems to be too much, have your spouse, relative or close friend help you.** Consider shopping through a catalogue.

