

Grief During the Holidays: Some Tips

The winter holidays are generally perceived as “the most wonderful time of the year.” But for those who are facing grief after the death of a loved one, the holidays may instead be a time filled with pain and sadness.

Even those for whom grief is not as fresh, the holidays may serve as an annual reminder of the loss—not only of that person, but of tradition and celebration.

Bereavement professionals working in hospice and palliative care understand how difficult this season can be. They support families coping with loss all year long. Bereavement counselors stress the importance of making decisions that feel right to the grieving person, and giving oneself permission to make new or different choices at the holidays.

Experts in Grief offer some tips:

Be Willing to Change Traditions.

Holidays often center on certain traditions and rituals. For some, continuing these traditions without a loved one may be an important way to continue sharing their memory. For others, it may be more comforting to develop new rituals to help lessen the pain and immediacy of the loss.

Help Reduce Stress.

While the holidays can be filled with meaning, they can also be filled with pressure and stress because of additional tasks such as shopping, baking and decorating. Grieving people should be encouraged to prioritize what needs to be done, and focus on those projects that may bring them pleasure. Perhaps the gift list can be pared down, cards need not be sent out, or another family member can cook the family dinner this year.

Remember those Who Have Died.

The holidays can bring opportunities to remember the person who has died in a way that is personally meaningful. Some families choose to participate in holiday events at a local hospice. Others may choose to share special family stories over a meal. Some may find that making a donation to a special charity or volunteering time to help others in need may be a comforting way to honor their loved one.

To learn more about free grief support groups in your area, visit hospiceofsouthernmaine.org, or contact Carol Schoneberg-Robinson at CSchoneberg@hospiceofsouthernmaine.org - (207) 289-3651.

Daytime Bereavement Support Group – Scarborough

September 21 – November 9, 2016 on Wednesdays from 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
MaineHealth Learning Resource Center, 100 Campus West Drive

Support Through the Holidays Daytime Bereavement Support Group – Scarborough

November 16, 2016 – January 4, 2017 on Wednesdays from 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
MaineHealth Learning Resource Center, 100 Campus West Drive

Evening Bereavement Support Group – Scarborough

January 24 – March 14, 2017 on Tuesdays from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Hospice of Southern Maine (Administrative Offices) 180 US Route One in Scarborough