

Coping With Loss During the Holidays



When you're grieving the loss of a loved one, the holidays can seem overwhelming. Here are a few tips and strategies you may want to try:

- Take each day one step, one breath at a time
- Give yourself permission to do as much—or as little—as you feel like
- Be honest with your friends and family about how you're feeling
- Plan your schedule in advance making sure to build in quiet time, time with family and friends, and time with the church if you have one
- Re-think gift-giving—donate to a favorite charity or pick a new one
- Accept one invitation
- Pick a tradition you love and keep it
- Invent a new tradition to help remember your loved one in a special way
- Consider joining a support group to connect with others who share a similar loss
- Pay attention to potentially harmful coping mechanisms
- Give permission to talk about your loved one—sometimes others just need to hear it's ok
- Share a favorite memory of your loved one at dinner
- Place a photo or candle at the table to commemorate your loved one or play your loved one's favorite song
- Try to embrace the truth that love does not end at death—you still have an emotional connection

When you're watching someone suffer with their loss, here are some ideas you can consider:

- Offer to bring over a meal and share it with them (observing safe social distancing practices)
- Offer to watch the kids so they can get out for errands or needed downtime—be sure to wear your mask, and practice good hygiene!
- Reach out via phone, text, email, or IM—let them know you're there, you care, and are available to chat or just to listen
- Don't pressure them to attend something or do something they say they're not up to
- Don't judge them for their holiday decisions
- Remember that the holidays are not always joyful and magical for everyone and give your friend or loved one some slack when they feel blue or out of sorts