

# Coping with the Holidays Checklist

Holidays and other special celebrations can be very difficult in the absence of your loved one. As you approach these special days, it may be helpful to plan ahead and think about the meaning you wish this holiday season to hold for you and your family. While looking over this checklist please consider the following questions:

- Are you doing things out of habit, tradition, free choice or obligation?
- Can the responsibility be shared with others?
- Is there anything you want to do differently or the same?
- Would the holidays be the same without it?

## Greeting/Holiday Cards

- Mail as usual
- Shorten your list
- Include a letter
- Elect to skip this year

## Decorations

- Decorate as usual
- Modify your decorations
- Ask for help
- Let others do it
- Have a special decoration for your loved one
- Eliminate some or all decorations

## Holiday Meals

- Prepare as usual
- Go out for meal
- Invite friends over
- Eat alone
- Change time of the meal
- Change routine of the meal (this year do a buffet)
- Change location of the meal (eat in a different room/someone else's house)
- Ask for help

## Shopping

- Shop as usual
- Give cash
- Shop through catalogs
- Ask for help
- Shop early
- Make your gifts
- Give baked goods
- Shop with a friend
- Ask for help wrapping gifts
- Exchange gifts later or not at all
- Make a list of gifts before shopping

## Holiday Music

- Enjoy as usual
- Avoid turning the radio on
- Find new music selections
- Listen, have a good cry and allow yourself to feel sad

## Traditions

- Keep the old traditions
- Create new traditions
- Attend holiday parties
- Don't attend holiday parties
- Go to an entirely new place
- Bake the usual holiday foods
- Buy the usual holiday foods
- Bake, but modify routine and food selection
- Buy gifts early or from catalogue
- Don't exchange gifts at all
- Open gifts as usual
- Open gifts earlier or later than usual
- Go to the religious service
- Do not attend religious services
- Attend the religious service but at a different time
- Attend service at different location
- Spend quiet time alone
- Visit the cemetery

## Post-Holiday and Other Suggestions

- Spend as usual
- Remove the decorations early
- Go out of town
- Spend time alone
- Spend time with only a few friends
- Write in your journal your
- Go to a movie
- Go to bed early

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