

Suggestions for Coping with Holidays

Holidays and anniversaries are times when people remember important and usually-happy occasions, and at the same time, look forward to the future. If there has been a death in the family, emotional wounds are left that can ache during these times of warmth and cheer. Feelings of isolation and loneliness may be magnified.

With planning and forethought, however, it is possible to get through these times. We hope the following suggestions are as helpful to you as they have been for others.

- ❖ Realize that this is a new holiday, unlike the holidays of the past.
- ❖ Acknowledge the absence of your loved one. Have a dinner or toast in their honor. Visit the cemetery or memorial site. Don't be afraid to cry, or to smile.
- ❖ Engage in spiritual activities that are comfortable for you.
- ❖ Do things because you want to do them, not because your loved one "would have wanted it that way." Do what you are comfortable doing.
- ❖ Initiate activity yourself; do not wait for others. Plan your own holiday. Make phone calls to your friends or relatives. Calls to people in similar situations can be worthwhile. Follow through with these activities.
- ❖ Remember that one is a whole number. You need not be part of a couple to enjoy yourself. Time spent by yourself can also be rewarding.
- ❖ Be gentle with yourself; all wounds take time to heal. Realize that you will feel sad at times.
- ❖ Take time to identify and take care of your needs. Get adequate rest and exercise. Be aware of the increased accessibility to sugar, caffeine, and alcohol during the holiday season, and guard against overuse of these substances.
- ❖ Look at the holiday season as the beginning of a new journey, starting a new year. Enjoy the gifts of the season found in special memories and contact with friends and family.



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