

# LIFT

*Grief is a process, not a state. –Anne Grant*

October 2023	Living Is For Today
Bereavement Newsletter	West Texas Rehab’s Hospice of San Angelo

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Grief Education Support Group  
Tuesday, October 3, 5:30 pm  
WTRC/HOSA Bates Bereavement Center  
1933 University Avenue

Monthly Luncheon  
Tuesday, October 17, 11:00 am  
WTRC/HOSA IDT Room  
1933 University Avenue

Navigating the Holidays Workshop  
Thursday, October 12, 5 :30 – 7 :00 pm  
WTRC’s Conference Room  
1925 University Avenue

Candlelight Memorial Service  
Thursday, November 9, 6 :00 pm  
Christian Fellowship Baptist Church  
211 W. 17th Street, San Angelo

*For more information about any of HOSA’s bereavement offerings, including individual counseling, support groups, and/or memorial services, please call the Bereavement Department at 325-658-6524 or email Karen at [kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com](mailto:kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com).*

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*For many, holidays are the hardest part of grieving, and it seems “the holiday season” begins earlier and lasts longer every year. When you have lost someone special, the world has lost its festive qualities. Holidays can magnify this loss. On Oct 12, HOSA is offering a special opportunity to learn more about “navigating” the holidays and how to deal with the “festive opportunities” while grieving – whether it’s the first holiday season without your loved one or the 10th. We’ll share strategies for dealing with the next few months, tips on helping others who are grieving, and suggestions on finding hope amidst the loss. Light refreshments will be served. For more information or to save your spot, call Karen or Ervilene at 325-658-6524.*

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### 7 Ways to Go Easy on Yourself While Grieving at the Holidays

By Eleanor Haley, Accessed from [whatsyourgrief.com](http://whatsyourgrief.com)

**Remember, the Holidays Don't Have to Be Perfect.** Disavow yourself of the notion that perfection will protect you from experiencing grief and sadness this holiday season....It won't....People commonly feel they have to put on a brave face to convince others they are doing well, but it's especially common to struggle with grief this time of year—regardless of how long ago your loss occurred. So if you're off your holiday-game, you have a good excuse....

**Be Intentional but Flexible About Tradition.** Tradition is incredibly important, so it's a tender spot for many grieving people. Tradition provides a sense of comfort and security.... But after a death, it's usually something that has to change. Breaking tradition feels like succumbing to yet another loss, so there's often resistance around making changes. Many try to keep everything the same, but this often makes the loved one's absence even more glaring because the *only* difference is that they aren't there. An important question to ask as a family is: *How do we honor tradition while also allowing it to change?* ...[O]ne place to start is to focus on why you participate in the tradition in the first place. Consider: *What is the value at the heart of your ritual?* Togetherness, generosity, shared history, spirituality? Quite often, you'll find that it's okay for some of the 'what' to change, so long as you still connect with the 'why.'

**Practice Saying "No".** From November to January, commitments, pressures, and stressors tend to increase for everyone. As someone who is grieving, you have the added challenge of dealing with loss and change, which means you have less physical, emotional, and mental energy to go around....[Y]ou may want to try and say 'no' a little more these next few weeks.

**Schedule "Me" Time.** So, now that you're saying 'NO' more judiciously, we want you to re-invest some of that time in your own well-being. Work specific coping activities into your weekly calendar and plan for time-outs during busy activities and gatherings.

**Utilize Your Resources and Ask for Help.** You're not alone in this (though we know it may sometimes *feel* like you are). Even if you don't have family and friends you can count on, there are services and groups in your community that can hopefully help you make it through. (Like WTRC’s Hospice of San Angelo’s Bereavement Department.)

**Allow Yourself To Experience Moments of Comfort and Joy.** First of all, please know that *whatever* you're feeling right now is okay. Experiencing positive emotions during the holidays is never a given, especially when you're grieving. All we're saying is that if you do surprise yourself by laughing at Buddy the Elf or smiling at the grandkids’ unabashed joy on Christmas morning, go with it and don't feel guilty. Experiencing things like okay-ness, comfort, happiness, gratitude, and joy can feel like a betrayal to deceased loved ones—but it's not....

**Find Opportunities To Connect With Your Loved One.** One of the best ways to cope with the pain of missing a loved one at the holidays is to find ways to connect with them and to incorporate their memory into your holiday gatherings and celebrations....Studies show that private rituals can be just as, if not more, healing than larger remembrances.

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