

LIFT

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

December 2022

Bereavement Newsletter

Living Is For Today

West Texas Rehab's Hospice of San Angelo

Grief Education Support Group

Tuesday, December 6, 5:30 pm

WTRC/HOSA Bates Bereavement Center

1933 University Avenue

Monthly Luncheon

Tuesday, December 20, 11 am

WTRC/HOSA IDT Room

1933 University Avenue

LIGHT UP A LIFE TREE LIGHTING SERVICE

Thursday, December 1, 2022, 6 pm

Cactus Hotel Lobby

36 E. Twohig, 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.

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COPING WITH GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Accessed at vitas.com

Remember too, that sometimes anticipation of a holiday can be more difficult than the day itself.

Holidays can be difficult for people who have experienced the death of a loved one. Memories serve as constant reminders of loss. Watching others celebrate can be painful and overwhelming. Particularly in the first year after a death, survivors must learn how to develop new holiday rituals and traditions.

The first step in coping with grief at the holidays is to acknowledge that the first holiday season is difficult. You can prepare for it by making specific plans and obtaining the support you need. Remember too, that sometimes anticipation of a holiday can be more difficult than the day itself.

SOME TIPS FOR COPING WITH GRIEF AT THE HOLIDAYS

- Set realistic expectations for yourself. Remind yourself that this year is different. Decide if you can still handle past responsibilities and expectations. Examine the tasks and events of celebrating and ask yourself if you want to continue them. Accept others' offers to cook, shop, decorate, etc. Consider shopping by phone, internet or catalog this year if you feel a need to avoid crowds or memories.
- Despite the temptation, try to avoid "cancelling" the holidays. It is okay to avoid some circumstances that you don't feel ready to handle, but don't isolate yourself. Make some time for solitude, remembering, and grieving, but balance it with planned social activities.
- Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger — allow yourself to grieve. It is important to recognize that every family member has his or her own unique grief experience. No one way is right or wrong. Experiencing joy and laughter during a time of grief does not mean you have forgotten your loved one.
- Surround yourself with people who love and support you. Share your plans with family and friends, and let them know of changes in holiday routines. Memories can sometimes be a source of comfort to the bereaved, so share them by telling stories and looking at photo albums.

- **Draw comfort from doing for others.** Consider giving a gift or donation in memory of your loved one. Invite a guest who might otherwise be alone for the holidays. Adopt a needy family during the holiday season.
- **Take care of yourself.** Avoid using alcohol to self-medicate your mood. Try to avoid the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Physical exercise is often an antidote for depression. Writing in a journal can be a good outlet for your grief. Give yourself permission to buy something frivolous and indulgent, just because.
- **Create a new tradition or ritual that accommodates your current situation.** Some people find comfort by honoring traditions, while others find them unbearably painful. Discuss with your family the activities you want to include or exclude this year. Some examples of new rituals and traditions include: creating a memory box with photos, drawings, notes, or memorabilia; lighting a candle in honor of your loved one; putting a bouquet of flowers on your holiday table in honor of your loved one; creating a commemorative ornament and putting it on your Christmas tree; writing a poem about your loved one and reading it aloud during a holiday ritual; playing your loved one's favorite music or game; or planning a meal with your loved one's favorite foods.

The most important thing to remember is there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holiday season after the death of a loved one. The best coping mechanism for the first holiday season is to plan ahead, get support from others, and take it easy.

Oh, God, make small
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.
-T. E. Hulme, "The Embankment"

December 2022



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