

LIFT

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

November 2020
Bereavement Newsletter

Living Is For Today
West Texas Rehab's Hospice of San Angelo

Navigating the Holidays

Virtually

Tuesday, November 10, 5:30 – 7:00 pm

For many people, holidays are the hardest part of grieving. When you have lost someone special, the world has lost its festive qualities. Holidays can magnify this loss. This year, the holidays may be even more challenging and difficult because of the pandemic. HOSA is offering a special opportunity to learn more about “navigating” this holiday season 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. This live virtual workshop will be facilitated by HOSA bereavement counselors Ervilene Kuhlmann and Karen Schmeltekopf.

For more information and to save your spot, contact Karen at 325-658-6524 or kschmeltekopf@wtrc.com.

HOW TO CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS DURING A PANDEMIC

One of the most common bereavement tips for observing holidays after the loss of a loved one is to consider changing things up and doing things differently. This year, because of the health concerns caused by exposure to the novel coronavirus, celebrating differently may be a necessity for all of us concerned about minimizing health risks for older and more vulnerable friends and family members.

What we are learning about how to minimize exposure, as general principles of behavior, is the following:

- Outdoors is better than indoors,
- Small gatherings are better than large,
- Six feet of space between people not in your bubble is safer than fewer feet,
- Masks and face coverings are better than none, and
- Frequent hand washing and infrequent handling of common utensils are important.

Add to the list: People who are running fever or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive to the virus should quarantine.

WTRC’s Hospice of San Angelo knows that celebrations are important, and we do not discourage people from celebrating. But we do encourage people to be cautious and plan in advance on how to celebrate most safely.

The following tips have been compiled from the following online sources:

- “How Can We Save Halloween and Holidays from the Coronavirus?” (<https://www.cleveland.com/metro/2020/07/how-can-we-save-halloween-and-holidays-from-the-coronavirus.html>)
- “Stay Safe This Labor Day Weekend: If You Plan to Be Social, Here’s How To Lower Your Risk of Covid-19 Infection,” CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/04/health/labor-day-coronavirus-safety-wellness/index.html>)
- “Ways the Holidays Will Look Different in 2020,” *Reader’s Digest* (<https://www.rd.com/list/ways-holiday-different-this-year/>)

TIPS TO CONSIDER

Meals

- Set up tables and gather outside; make plans to remain outside if there is bad weather,
- Keep family units separated by six feet or more,
- Use paper goods and plastic eating utensils,
- Assemble each family unit’s paper goods and plastic utensils in large freezer bags before everyone arrives,
- Have one member from each family pick up bags for family unit,

- Ice down bottled drinks (tea, water, etc.), picked up by one member from each family unit for member of his or her family,
- Have one person fill the plates,
- Serve family units with family-sized platters of their meals,
- Serve individual servings in small containers prepared before everyone arrives,
- Wear masks at all times when not eating, and
- Provide trash container for everyone to put his own trash into.

Gifts

- Set up your own Santa's Workshop and make your gifts this year,
- Consider making and wrapping extra gifts for hospitals and care facilities,
- Shop online; be sure to check with local vendors about online offers and curbside pickup, and
- If delivering your own gifts, call in advance and leave gifts on the porch; have a socially distanced visit on the front porch.

Entertainment

- Be aware of which holiday events in your area have been cancelled,
- Attend holiday events which follow guidelines about minimizing risk (outdoor setting, masks, social distancing, etc.)
- Listen to holiday music on devices, not in person,
- Practice hygge (pronounced *hoo-ga*), Denmark's obsession with all things cozy (candles, a warm fire on a cold night, a cup of hot cocoa, a good book).

If there is a silver lining in the pandemic, it might be that we have "permission" to let go of things that were not really important to us and to focus on the things that are. Perhaps this year, we will not feel compelled to overspend on gifts. Instead of rushing to sign our name on a card so we can get it in the mail, we will write personal notes or pick up the phone. We will have more time to spend with family and friends and make plans to do so safely. We may be separate, but we are not alone.

Finally, New Year's Eve

"New Year's Eve is one of the biggest party holidays in the USA. But this year, we'll have to ring in the new in small, more intimate gatherings. While nothing is set in stone yet, it seems unlikely that huge events like the ball drop in Times Square and high capacity celebrations at restaurants and clubs will occur. Instead, opt to spend New Year's Eve at home and make it festive with paper decorations and noisemakers. And hey – never say never, but remembering that it's pretty impossible for 2021 to get any worse than 2020 is sure to lift your holiday spirits! ("10 Ways We Already Know the Holidays Will Look Different," Reader's Digest)

We hope everyone has a safe Happy Thanksgiving!



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