



Holiday Grief Tips

For many people, this is a season of celebrations. However, the holidays are often a difficult time for those of us who are bereaved and coping with loss.

For many people, this is a season of celebrations. However, the holidays are often a difficult time for those of us who are bereaved and coping with loss. Many bereaved and injured people face this season with apprehension often in fear of their emotional reactions to what are supposed to be happy, memorable events.

A common question asked by those mourning a loved one or struggling to make sense of other losses is, "How can I get through the holidays?" There is no single answer of what we should or should not do, but it is important that we consider what activities are comfortable for us to participate in during the holidays.

Here are some suggestions for people experiencing bereavement and/or injury for coping during the holidays:

- | Plan ahead for the approaching holidays. Accept that this might be a difficult time for you. The additional stress this season brings may impact you emotionally, physically, and spiritually. These are normal reactions. Be prepared for rushes of emotions that may occur.
- | Recognize that the holidays might not be the same as they were in the past. Expecting everything to seem the same might lead to disappointment. Modify or make new traditions if it feels right. Just remember to include others who are grieving, especially children, in decisions.
- | Don't overwhelm or over commit yourself. Give yourself a reprieve. Take time for yourself and take care of yourself. Take it slow and easy, one step at a time.
- | Be careful not to isolate yourself. It is all right to take time for yourself, but try not to cut yourself off from the support of family and friends.
- | The holidays may affect other family members. Talk to others as you make plans and share your feelings. Respect other's choices and needs, and compromise if necessary.
- | Expect to experience some feelings of emotional pain. When the feelings come, let them.

- | Accept a few invitations to be with close family or friends. Choose the ones that sound most appealing at the time and decline the ones that feel more like an obligation.
- | Talk about your feelings. Let people know if you are having a tough day.
- | Share your favorite stories with others and make a toast or light a candle in honor and remembrance.

When everyone else appears so happy and cheerful; it is easy to feel alone. You may feel out of sorts with the holiday season. Recognizing that the holidays can be painful often helps ease that sense of isolation. If you need any additional assistance, please call 1-877-MADD-HELP (877-623-3435). MADD is just one call away.