

GRIEVING DURING FESTIVITIES



“Grief has a way of intensifying during the festive season, as every tradition and decoration reminds me of your absence.”.

– Anonymous

NAVIGATING

GRIEF DURING FESTIVE SEASONS

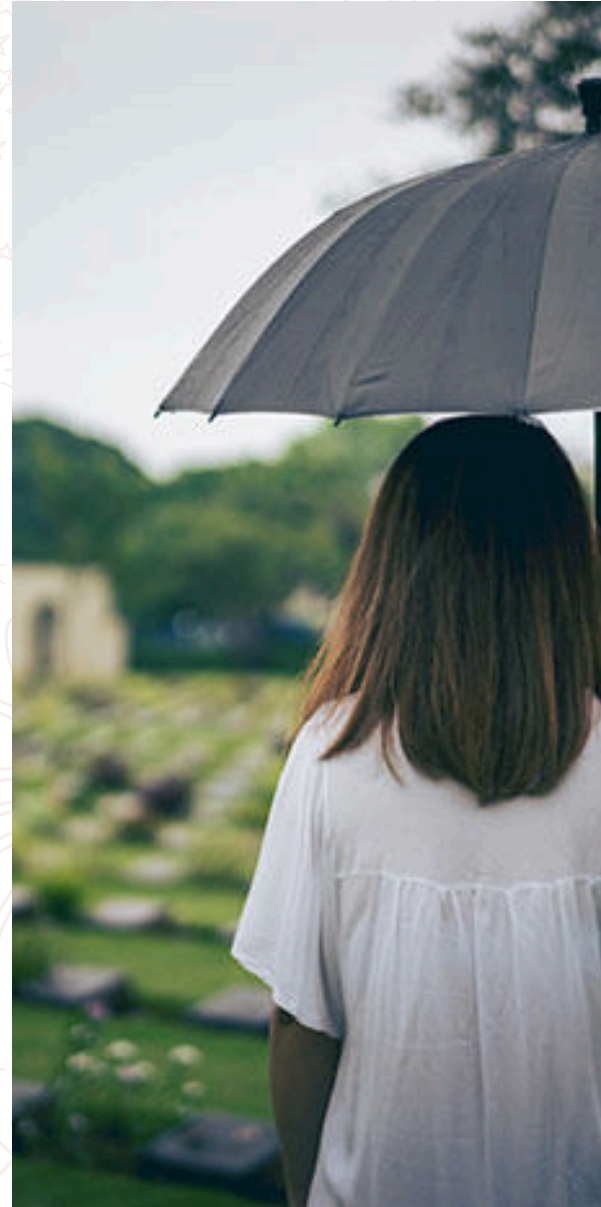


Dealing with grief amidst celebrations can be a tough and intricate journey. Holidays are usually linked with happiness, merriment, and unity, which can be particularly tough for those dealing with loss. Whether it's the passing of a dear one, a meaningful relationship, or any other personal setback, managing grief during festive periods demands specific coping strategies and empathy.

GRIEVING IS A NORMAL RESPONSE

The holidays are typically a time of joy and celebration for most people, but this time of year can be very different for grieving people. The death of a loved one can be especially hard during the holidays as they are full of memories, traditions, and sensations associated with the holidays – all reminders that this year is different, and someone is no longer here.

We all experience grief differently, and we all heal differently, too. When we're grieving during the holidays, we can take special care to be mindful of our feelings and find what's right for us in each moment.



But there are ways to honor our grief and still find moments of cheer. The more we bring awareness to what we're experiencing, the closer we'll get to noting our grief, accepting it, and finding a way to move forward.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH GRIEF DURING FESTIVALS

1 Simplify

Don't expect to do everything you have in the past. Pick and choose what you're up for. This will give you the chance to think about which traditions hold real meaning for you and which you have simply observed because of habit or other people's expectations.



2 Surround yourself with people who love and support you & talk about your grief

Identify those friends and relatives who understand that the holiday season can increase your sense of loss and who will allow you to talk openly about your feelings. Find those persons who encourage you to be yourself and accept all of your feelings.



3 Set realistic expectations for yourself

Assess your ability to manage responsibilities and accept help if needed. Loss can be draining, affecting your energy levels. Listen to your body and mind, prioritize self-care, and adjust expectations for the holiday season.



TIPS FOR DEALING WITH GRIEF DURING FESTIVALS

4 Try to avoid cancelling the holidays despite the temptation

Try not to overextend yourself or isolate, but take time for yourself. Avoid situations you're not ready for. Keeping busy won't distract from grief; talking about feelings is important.



5 Embrace your memories

Don't ignore memories of loved ones after they pass away. Share these memories with family and friends, acknowledging the mix of emotions they bring. Whether they bring laughter or tears, each emotion is valid and should be expressed. Honor and treasure memories made with love.



6 Give yourself permission to feel

Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger, etc. No one emotion is better than the other and don't beat yourself up for feeling a sense of happiness during the holidays. Avoid self medicating with things like alcohol. If you find yourself needing a boost, go for a jog, walk the dog, or even write in a journal.



EXPLORE WAYS TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND HONOR YOUR LOVED ONE'S MEMORY

Below are some ideas to consider:



Light a memorial candle;
consider incorporating
their favorite smell or color



Hang a special
decoration in memory
of your loved one



Visit their grave or the place
where their ashes have been
scattered



Cook a dish in their
memory

A POEM OF REMEMBRANCE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

*At the rising of the sun and at its going down
We remember them.*

*At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter
We remember them.*

*At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
We remember them.*

*At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer
We remember them.*

*At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn
We remember them.*

*At the beginning of the year and when it ends
We remember them.*

*As long as we live, they too will live;
for they are now a part of us.*

~ Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer

SOURCES

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