



Grieving and the Holidays

For those who are grieving, the holidays can be an especially difficult time. Here are some suggestions that may help ease the way through that curious maze of expectations and events.

Give yourself permission to grieve. Find helpful ways to regularly express your sadness and other feelings. Give yourself permission to feel good, to laugh, and to have fun. These experiences, like grief, are normal human responses.

As you plan how to spend the holidays, remember that your needs and those of other family members may be quite different. Take time to evaluate activities, traditions, and expectations, and try to identify your feelings and needs.

Consider remembering your loved one through a ritual and/or memorial, like a candle that is lit at certain times, or a single fresh flower kept in a place of honor. There are many possibilities. These ways of remembering are important because through them one's absent loved one is acknowledged and made present.

Take care of yourself. Get regular exercise, try to eat well, and get plenty of rest. Pace yourself. Limit your expectations. Give yourself permission to say "No!"

As painful as it may be, try to accept that the holidays will never again be as they were, which doesn't mean that they won't again be pleasant or even joyful. They will just be different. As you are able, be gentle with yourself and others, and allow your sense of humor to be your companion.

If you would like to talk with someone at Iowa City Hospice about your grief, please call us at (319) 351-5665 or 1-800-897-3052 or go to our website, www.iowacityhospice.org.