

## *Some Suggestions We Hope You Find Helpful*

Acknowledge that the holidays will be different. While they may be tough for you, others may not find the holidays so difficult. Everyone's grief is different.

Decide which traditions or rituals you want to keep, such as decorating, parties, sending cards, etc. For some, surrounding themselves with family and/or friends is comforting. For others, they are more comfortable spending time by themselves. Do what works for you.

Be honest. Tell people what you **DO** want to do for the holidays and what you **DON'T** want to do. Plan ahead. It can help reduce anxiety knowing you have a plan in place. It's OK to make tentative plans. You can let others know that you will keep them updated on how you are feeling.

Talk to kids about the holidays—it can be confusing for kids that the holidays can be both happy and sad after a death. Let them know it's OK to enjoy the holiday and that it's OK to be sad.

Choose to be around people who are supportive and make you feel comfortable. Be around people who are OK with tears and talking about your loved one. It's OK to cry.

If you are stressed about the crowds at the mall, cut back on gifts or do your shopping online. It may help if you are not ready to see all the holiday decorations.

Say yes to help. There will be people who want to help and may offer their support. Take them up on their offers. If people aren't offering, ask. This can be hard if it isn't your style, but it is important. Asking others to help with cooking, shopping, or decorating can be a big relief.

Practice self-care. Whatever it is that helps you recharge, do it. The holidays are hectic even under normal circumstances. Make some quiet time for yourself. Journal, meditate, listen to music, etc. Try to eat healthy, get enough rest, exercise and spend time outside.

Remember, it's OK to be happy—this doesn't diminish how much you love and miss the person who isn't there this holiday. Don't feel guilty for the joy you do find this season. Enjoy yourself when you can! The holidays can be tough, but there will also be love and joy.

*We wish you peace and comfort this holiday season.*

If you need additional support, please contact Vicki Shoemake at (601)622-6769.

