



HOSPICE MESSAGES OF HOPE

Befriending Grief During the Holidays

Holidays can be the backbone of our relationships. While day-to-day life can easily be forgotten, holidays are special. Since traditions are foundational in many families and most of them involve Thanksgiving and Christmas, people can tell you a minute-by-minute agenda of what happens on those special days.

Unfortunately, this can also make holidays difficult if you have suffered the loss of a loved one. But even when your heart is aching, there are several things that you can do to help you “make it through.”

START NEW TRADITIONS

Maybe someone else will carve the turkey or put the star on top of the Christmas tree. Perhaps you may want to do more shopping online to avoid the crowds and energy of a store.

BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF

Don't expect too much of yourself or others. If you are planning on attending a Christmas event, give yourself permission to cancel at the last minute. Make all of your responses tentative this year. It's not helpful to be self-critical and remind yourself of things that you SHOULD be doing. Be prepared for tears and don't apologize if you are having a good time. Maybe you want to write down feelings and thoughts. Assume that your feelings are normal and can include anger, sadness confusion, panic, self-pity, hostility or even fear.

TALK

Do this as much or as little as YOU need to. Find good friends who are willing to listen to your story again and again. Affirm yourself! You are doing the best you can in a difficult situation. Have hope that you WILL make it through. Remember, anticipating the holiday is usually much worse than the actual holiday itself. Each day only has 24 hours in it.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Grieving the death of your baby or child: Buy a special ornament to put on the tree that honors your child. You might want to do this just the first year or perhaps every year. Donate flowers to your church in memory of your child. Make a donation to Toys for Tots in their name. Some people like to light a candle at special times remembering their child.

Grieving the death of your spouse: Many of the decisions that were formerly made together are now being made alone. This can be overwhelming in itself! Again, be gentle with yourself. Make small goals. Trust yourself and your inner wisdom. Remember that you may be numb, frozen and even exhausted. Grieving is hard work. Maybe start a new tradition of a special way to remember your spouse during this time.

OSF Home Care Services is here to support you and wants to meet you wherever you are in your grief journey.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call (800) 673-5288 or visit our website at www.osfhomecare.org.

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