



COPING WITH GRIEF THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

CHILDREN'S WORKBOOK

How to prepare for the holiday season while coping with grief.



Coping with Grief through the Holidays

After experiencing a loss, the holiday season may feel a lot different than it did before. Just remember that all the feelings and emotions you have within your grief are okay. Here are some tips that may help as the holiday season gets closer:

Ask for help, even when it's hard to do.

Sometimes we worry about asking people for help because we may feel confused by our thoughts or emotions and not want to share. Or maybe we worry that we will get in trouble for our feelings or burden other people with what we feel. However, the people who love you want to help you as you feel these hard emotions. What are some ways that you could ask for help?

Coping with feelings as they arise.

It is natural for people to experience a wide range of emotions while grieving. As hard as this time may be, it is important to express and cope with feelings as they come up. Avoid minimizing (making small) your own feelings or trying to put a “positive” spin on them. Be sure to identify positive coping skills to use when difficult feelings arise. What are healthy ways that you cope?

Find ways to remember and honor the person who died.

Include memories of the person who died in your celebration. Make something meaningful specifically for this person. Decide as a family, where these items should be placed during the holidays.

Here are some ideas to consider:

- Write a card or letter to the person who died.
- Write memories on strips of paper and use them to create a paper chain.
- Hang a special decoration in memory of the person, such as a wreath or stocking. If a stocking is used, family members can place cards or pieces of paper with memories inside.
- Gift-wrap a box and make an opening in the top for family and friends to share written memories. At a special time, the box can be unwrapped and the memories shared.
- Set a special memorial place at the table during a holiday meal.
- Create a space on a table or corner where you can place photos, stuffed animals, toys, cards, foods, and any other kinds of mementos.
- Share one of the person's favorite foods or meals. Food can be a great spark for sharing memories.





Activity:

On this page, write about or draw a picture of old and new food traditions.

What foods does your family typically cook for the holidays? What are the favorite foods of the person who died? Where will the meal be? What will the table look like? Who will be there? Who will sit where?





Activity:

On this page, write about or draw a picture of old and new holiday decorations.
What were the favorite decorations of the person who died? What decoration could you
create to honor the person who you are grieving?
Where could it hang?





Activity:

On this page, write about or draw a picture of old and new holiday traditions. What traditions are connected to the person who died? What new traditions would you like to create? (Explore this without worrying what others will think!) Who can we go to for support and care when experiencing emotions around traditions?





Reflection

It's important to meet and talk about how things went during the holiday season with your family. You can talk about what worked, what didn't, what you want to do differently next year. You can write some of those thoughts down on this page during and/or after the holiday season.

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