



Grief & The Holidays

“Tis’ The Season To Be Jolly”...We’re smack-dab in the middle of another holiday season...“The most wonderful time of the year”...or is it? For some, it just might be the most difficult time of the year.

Most people look forward to the holidays; getting together with family and friends, reveling in their holiday rituals and traditions and basking in all of the good feelings related to the season.

Yet, in the midst of all the festive and fun-filled activities, there are those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. And for those who have endured the loss of a loved one, especially in the past year, the holidays many times can be very difficult and a painful reminder of their loss. Instead of feelings of happiness, laughter and joy during the holidays, the holidays may bring about feelings of anxiety, sadness and loneliness as the holidays often times magnify the loss of a loved one and may intensify one’s grief.

Here are some suggestions on things you can do to help support another person in the midst of the holidays and grief.

- You can send a card/letter, make a phone call and/or stop by and visit with them to let the grieving person know you are thinking of them and their deceased loved one.
- You may find that they want to talk about their loved one who had died or their feelings associated with their loss. Lend an ear and just listen. Many times having someone who actively listens helps the grieving person work through their grief/loss.
- You should never tell someone that’s grieving that they should “get over it” or that they should “be over it” already. Instead, give the person hope and reassurance that eventually, they will enjoy the holidays again and that you understand it takes time.
- In the meanwhile, offer to help them and/or their family with some of their holiday activities such as their holiday baking, holiday shopping and/or their holiday decorating. By alleviating some of

the tedious tasks surrounding the holidays, no matter of how fun they might be, for those dealing with grief, you may also help alleviate some of their stress and anxiety which in turn may allow them to enjoy parts of the holiday season.

- You can ask them if they are interested in volunteering with you during the holiday season. Doing something for someone else, such as helping at a homeless shelter or working with kids, may help them feel better about the holidays.
- You can donate gifts and/or money in memory of the their loved one. Letting a person know that the person who died is not forgotten can go a long way in the healing process of grieving
- Above all, be supportive and respect the way they choose to handle the holidays and their holiday traditions. Some may want to continue and participate in all their holiday traditions while others may choose to change some of their rituals or forgo some or all of their usual holiday traditions.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve and handle the holidays. Remember, while most of us want to soak up and enjoy every moment of the holiday season, some people are just trying to survive it. Be kind and supportive.

You can find additional information on youth grief and support on Mourning Hope's website at www.mourninghope.org or if you are concerned about a student who maybe struggling with Grief and/or depression, please contact you school's SCIP team and/or visit our website at www.scipnebraska.com

You can also visit the sites below for more information about grief.

<https://grief.com/the-five-stages-of-grief/>

<https://healgrief.org/how-to-help-someone-grieving/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/valley-girl-brain/201604/how-help-someone-who-is-grieving>



<https://www.psychguides.com/guides/grief-symptoms-causes-and-effects/>

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/grief-and-mourning-process-1132545>

mindfulnessandgrief.com/grieving-during-the-holidays/