

COPING WITH THE HOLIDAY

By: Linda Findlay



There are several things that may help you prepare for the holidays without your loved one:

-Educate yourself by reading books or articles on grief and attending a lecture on coping with the holidays.

Many funeral homes sponsor holiday workshops as a service to their families and their community

-Try to identify strengths or strategies that helped you adjust to previous losses in your life. These may be losses related to death or losses not related to death, (i.e. divorce).

-Try to develop as much support from family and friends as you can. Communicate that the holidays may be emotionally and physically draining for you and tell them how they can best help you during this time.

-Allow some time to feel sad. Have a good cry if you need to.

-Be careful with excessive use of alcohol and medications either separately or together.

-If you need some quiet time, take it.

-Set priorities! Grief is exhausting; know that you may tire quickly.

-Save your energy for the most important things.

-Delegate! Let others share the workload by preparing food and helping with decorations.

-If you aren't up to a large family affair, have a scaled down gathering with a few close family members and friends.

-Understand that others may have difficulty saying the name of your loved one for fear of upsetting you or because they are uncomfortable with their own feelings.

The most important thing to remember is COMMUNICATE. It is always best to try to communicate with family and friends. I see this especially among family members, nobody wants to say anything in fear of "bringing it up". If all of you communicate what your individual needs and wishes are, the better you will come together on how to handle the holiday. Not knowing what each of you need, is not going to help any of you! I suggest that you all write down each of your expectations, wishes and needs. Share with each other! Great conversations can be the result of sharing and can help with getting through the holiday.