

### **Feelings of Grief may be Magnified During the Holidays**

The holidays are often thought of as joyful time of the year, filled with sights and sounds of seasonal cheer. Yet for people struggling with the death of a family member or other loved one, the holidays can be a difficult time.

The season may be full of reminders of the loss in our lives. And it is not just recent losses. During the holidays, feelings of grief can seem fresh, even if a loved one died years ago.

A suggestion for coping with grief during the holidays is to allow yourself permission to do what feels right for you. At a time of year when many people feel compelled to follow holiday traditions, letting yourself do something different can be helpful. Some people find it comforting to be with family and friends, emphasizing the familiar. Others may wish to avoid old traditions and try something new.

Hospice professionals help families cope with loss throughout the year. National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization offers additional suggestions for coping with grief during the holidays:

- **Plan for the approaching holidays.** Recognize that the holidays might be a difficult time for you. The stress may affect you emotionally, mentally, and physically. This is a normal reaction. Be prepared and gentle with yourself.
- **Recognize that the holidays won't be the same.** Expecting everything to seem the same might lead to disappointment. Doing things a bit differently acknowledges the change in your life but still offers continuity with the past.
- **Be careful not to isolate yourself.** It's important to take quiet, reflective time for yourself but also allow yourself the support offered from friends and family.
- **The holidays may affect other family members.** Talk over your plans and share your feelings. Respect other's choices and needs.
- **Avoid additional stress.** Decide what you really want to do over the holiday season and give yourself permission to avoid things you don't want to do.

*We are here to help. For more information, please call us.*