

PATHWAYS CENTER

for GRIEF & LOSS

WAYS TO COPE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Whether it is greeting cards, holiday baking, putting up a tree, decorating outside, or having a big family dinner, ask these questions before making any decisions or trying to go on as you always have: Do I really enjoy doing this? Is this a task that someone else could or would like to do? Would it still be a holiday without it?

- Look at the traditions and decide which ones you will continue this year and which ones you will change - at least for this year (when to open presents, what and where to eat for dinner, putting up the tree).
- Make three lists - what you'll need to accomplish during the holidays, what you'd like to do during the holidays, and what you don't want to do during the holidays. Know the differences and be clear with yourself and with others.
- Limit holiday baking - perhaps buy instead to allow less stress, less confusion, more time, more energy.
- The same applies to holiday meals - don't take on too much yourself - have others help, go out to eat, perhaps change traditions.
- Attend a different church service or go at a different time of day if possible.
- Consider not sending Christmas cards this year, if it is just too much. Or include a simple memorial service card in each card, or have the addresses and perhaps cards pre-printed or photocopy one Christmas letter to cut down on your efforts to keep in touch with everyone.
- Order by catalog, give gifts of money or gift certificates, or shop during weekday mornings to avoid crowds and confusion.
- Adopt a needy family for the holidays.
- Listen to your body. Take time to rest, refresh and renew.
- If your energy is low and your desire is little for large family/social gatherings, draw the line. Say no. Rent a good video, read a good book, pamper yourself.
- Reach out to others by visiting or taking food to a shut-in or by sharing your holiday with another bereaved family.
- Visit a special place that brings you warm memories.
- Try to remember; don't try to forget.

