



## GRIEF & THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are usually celebrated with family, friends and loved ones. We gather to celebrate the magic of the holiday season while honoring traditions that often started at a young age. It's a time full of joy, love, happiness, and thankfulness. However, what happens when you lose a loved one and suddenly the holidays look and feel much different? Navigating the grief and emotions surrounding losing a loved one can impact the way we choose to celebrate the holiday season.

It's natural for the emotions related to our grief to magnify around the holidays. We often feel a greater sense of loss, sadness and loneliness. Here are some tips on ways to cope with those increased emotions:

- When gathered with others, share favorite stories and memories of your loved one.
- Talk about your grief. Don't worry about bringing anyone down. You're allowed to grieve, and you're allowed to talk about it.
- Create boundaries with your time. You do not have to attend every party or event—if you need to take time to yourself, do it.
- Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger—allow yourself to grieve.
- Ask for help. Reminding loved ones that you're having a rough time may be enough, but you may also want to reach out for more support. Look for support groups or contact a professional counselor to help you deal with your grief in a healthy way.



## HONORING YOUR LOVED ONE

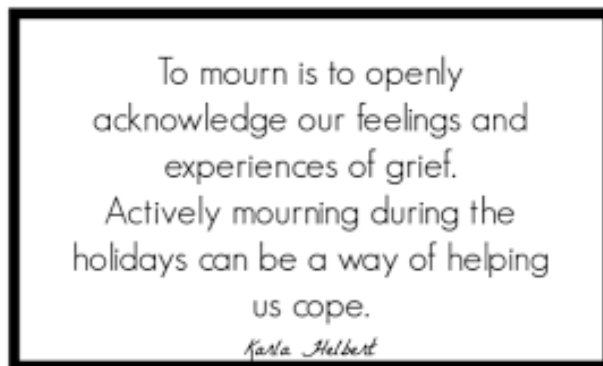
Here are some ideas on ways you can honor your loved one:

- Light a candle in honor of your loved one.
- Visit/bring flowers to the cemetery.
- Visit favorite places and savor the memories you and your loved one share.



- Create something: a quilt or teddy bear from your loved one's favorite clothes.
- Plant a tree, dedicate a memorial brick or park bench in your loved one's honor.
- Set up a memorial scholarship or fund in honor of your loved one.
- Donate to your loved one's favorite charity.
- Place a commemorative ornament on your Christmas tree.
- Create a memory box filled with photos, memories, letters from family members, or drawings from children.
- Play your loved one's favorite music or game.
- Plan a meal with your loved one's favorite food.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grief looks different for all of us, and grief does not have a timetable. The holidays can intensify feelings of grief and loss but know that no matter what, you can and will get through them.



#### Sources:

- Grief.com- <https://grief.com/grief-the-holidays/>
- VITAS Healthcare- <https://www.vitas.com/family-and-caregiver-support/grief-and-bereavement/holidays-and-grief/remembering-loved-ones-on-holidays-anniversaries-and-special-days>
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- Psychology Today- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201512/how-deal-grief-during-the-holidays>