

Grief during the Holidays

Advice from the Hospice Foundation of America

COPING WITH LOSS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are often a difficult time for those who are bereaved and coping with loss. A common question asked by those mourning a loved one or struggling to make sense of other losses is, "How can I get through the holidays?" There is no single answer of what one should or shouldn't do. Hospice Foundation of America offers one guiding principle: do what is comfortable.

The key to coping with grief during the holidays is to find the way that is right for you. Some people find it helpful to be with family and friends, emphasizing the familiar. Others may wish to avoid old traditions and try something different. Others will find new ways to acknowledge the season.

Some suggestions for coping:

- Plan for the approaching holidays. This might be a difficult time for you. The additional stress may affect you emotionally, cognitively, and physically; this is a normal reaction. Be prepared.
- Recognize that the holidays might not be the same. Expecting everything to seem the same might lead to disappointment. Doing things a bit differently can acknowledge the change while preserving continuity with the past.
- Be careful not to isolate yourself. It's all right to take time for yourself but don't cut yourself off from the support of family and friends.
- The holidays may affect other family members. Talk over your plans and share your feelings. Respect other's choices and needs, and compromise if necessary.
- Avoid additional stress. Decide what you really want to do, and what can be avoided.



Hospice of Hilo offers on-going support to all who have experienced loss. Individual and group support is available, for more information call 969-1733.