



# COPING WITH THE HOLIDAYS

## COVID 19

The holidays can bring an array of emotions to the surface, from joy and happiness, to grief and dread. This year, due to the global pandemic, it can exacerbate the grief we may be feeling due to many restrictions on travel and seeing friends and family. Below are some tips on how to navigate your grief of your special person, while in the midst of COVID-19.

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**It's okay to grieve:** If the holidays are difficult for you, take the time to grieve in a way that feels natural to you. Give yourself permission to not do things and not worry about how other people think you should spend the holidays. Be careful of the "shoulds" and take the pressure off yourself to live up to societal expectations. It's okay to grieve that the holidays may look and feel different this year due to COVID and grief reactions to these changes are normal.

**Cope as a family:** If the provincial COVID guidelines deem it's safe to gather with family members, consider coming together to celebrate the holidays, and grieve together. Be honest with each other about your feelings and try to acknowledge and accept that everyone grieves in different ways.

**Care for yourself:** Holidays and special occasions can be emotional. It is important to try and get lots of rest and keep some sort of daily routine. Be aware that your emotions can be affected by your sleeping and eating intake. Try not to overextend yourself and acknowledge if you need some quiet time to rest and reflect.

**Include the children:** While they may not express grief like adults, children are grieving too. Include children in the discussions about the holidays. Ask them what they want or don't want. Encourage them to express their feelings. You could involve them with a new tradition to remember the person who has died like creating a handmade ornament and baking special cookies. This is an active way for them to acknowledge the loss without necessarily talking about it directly.

**Embrace your memories:** Memories of your loved one are precious. Some memories are sweet, some are funny and some may not be so pleasant. Share some of your memories with families and friends, even if you have to use a virtual platform for family and friends far away. Remembering is often an important part of the healing.

**Reach out to others:** Identify friends and relatives who understand your loss and can provide support and comfort, using a virtual platform if needed. Let them know how you are feeling and accept their support. You could give them specific tasks to do which could benefit you and them. Remember, if grief or family problems feel too overwhelming, it may be best to seek out increased support available in your community.

**Plan for the future:** Plan something you can look forward to after the day to reward yourself for getting through it.

While nothing can take away the hurt you feel, we hope these tips will help you cope with the holidays.

[www.cehhospice.org](http://www.cehhospice.org)



902.893.3265

@cehhospice

Our office is located at: 89 Queen Street, Truro NS B2N 2B2

