



When we honestly ask ourselves
which persons in our lives
mean the most to us,
we often find it is those,
who instead of giving much advice,
solutions or cures,
have chosen rather
to share our pain
and touch our wounds
with a gentle and tender hand.

The friend who can be silent with us
in a moment of despair or confusion,
who can stay with us
in an hour of grief and bereavement,
who can tolerate not knowing,
not curing, not healing,
and face with us the reality
of our powerlessness,
that is the friend who cares.

- Henri Nouwen

We're here to help

Support is available. If you need to speak with someone, please contact Palliative Care Services which includes bereavement support. For more information about **Palliative Care Services** and bereavement support services contact 306-655-5868.

Other sources of support include the following:

Spiritual Care Support

St. Paul's Hospital 306 655-5000
Humboldt and area 306 682-8139

Social Worker Support

Royal University Hospital 306 655-2579
St. Paul's Hospital 306 655-5519
Saskatoon City Hospital 306 655-8352

Palliative Care Support 306 655-5868

In rural areas:

Contact your local hospital or health centre.

Acknowledgements

Grief - Coping with the Holidays
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www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/palliative-care

Grief

Coping with the holidays



"Green Skies and Purple Seas Sunset"
courtesy of Gina De Gorna

Palliative Care Services



Saskatchewan
Health Authority

For many people, the holiday season is a difficult time of the year because holidays are often associated with joyous family celebrations. This season of the year can emphasize the absence of your loved one. It is important to know that you and your family do have options about how to cope with the holidays. Here are some suggestions that you may find helpful during the holiday season:

Plan - As much as you may wish to be absent from the holiday, this isn't possible. You can, however, take control of the situation and plan for what you do and do not want to participate in at this time.

Be honest - Family get-togethers may be extremely difficult. Be honest with each other about your feelings. Sit down and decide what you all want to do for the holiday season. Try not to set expectations too high for yourself or other family members.

Be careful of "shoulds" - It is better to do what feels best for you and your family, not what you or others think you should do. Give yourself permission to not do things. Once you have decided how your family will handle the holidays, let others know. Remember, what you choose to do this time can always be changed next year.

Accept happiness - Recognize that you can be happy and express joy. This does not mean that you are dishonoring the person who has died.

Do what you can - Do the holiday preparation that you enjoy and look for alternatives from those you don't. For example, this year you could buy baked goods, let others bake for you or do without.



Take time for you - Be aware of the demands, pressures, and fatigue that are associated with the holidays. Take time to care for yourself.

Embrace memories - You may find yourself remembering and reminiscing about other holidays you shared with your loved one who is gone. This is normal. Let the memories come. Talk about them. Tears and sadness are normal. This is all part of mourning and doesn't stop just because it's a holiday.

Share your feelings - As the holiday approaches, it may be helpful to share your feelings, concerns, and apprehensions with someone. Let them know what is difficult for you. Try to accept their offers of help.

Do something symbolic - Think about including rituals that can appropriately symbolize your memory of your loved one. For example, hanging a special ornament, lighting a candle, or setting aside a special time to channel your feelings and thoughts into an activity. They can make your feelings more manageable.

Reach out to others - Consider doing something for someone else. Although you may feel deprived, reaching out to another can bring you some measure of fulfillment.

Often after the first year of bereavement, people expect you to be "over it" - you may never be "over it". We do heal and learn to live with our losses. But we may still feel intense sadness many years after the loss ... especially at holiday times.