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COPING WITH GRIEF: 2021 EDITION

A helpful guide for easing
grief during the holiday
season and beyond.

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Where Family Matters



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COPING WITH GRIEF

Everyone grieves differently and for different reasons, but one thing remains constant in the process. Grieving is not a linear process. One moment you feel you've fully moved past something; the next moment, it's right back in front of your face.

You can even be grieving and heartbroken about something and not even know it. Here are some examples of events that can cause grieving:

- Death of a loved one
- The loss of a pet
- The end of a relationship of any kind, platonic or romantic
- Job loss or the end of a career
- Medical diagnosis or chronic illness

When it comes down to it, grief is really just another word for love. You've lost something or someone you truly and deeply cared for, and you're grieving that loss. The good news is that managing grief while challenging is possible.

This guide aims to provide guidance, peace, and helpful tips to help alleviate stress and grief experienced this year for both adults and children and how to make the most of the holidays and start the new year with positivity and an open heart.

HOW TO MANAGE GRIEF

Grief is a natural response to losing someone or something important to you. You may feel various emotions, like sadness or loneliness, and you might experience it for several different reasons.

Everyone grieves differently. However, if you understand your emotions, take care of yourself, and seek support, you can heal.



WHAT ARE THE STAGES OF GRIEF?

There are five common stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. It's important to note that not everyone will have the same experiences, at the same time, in the same order, or to the same magnitude. Some may skip a stage altogether, and some may experience more than one of the stages simultaneously.



HANDLING SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

How you handle the symptoms of grief will have a direct impact on the outcome of the process. If your feelings of anger or depression aren't effectively dealt with, it's possible to get "stuck" in a stage.

Symptoms of physical grief include tiredness or constant fatigue, weight gain or weight loss, or bodily aches and pains. Symptoms of emotional grief include guilt from failing to make amends, worry about what life will be like now, feelings of helplessness over the situation, intrusive memories of what things used to be like, or fantasizing about how things would be if the loss never occurred.

A coping strategy for grief symptoms can include various things, like changing your eating habits to challenging your thought processes. It's critical to identify these symptoms as soon as possible so you have a way to work through them. It might be easy to ignore minor back pain or attribute it to the box you moved last week when it's actually a physical manifestation of your loss.



GRIEF AND THE HOLIDAYS

Don't you wish you could press pause on the grieving process during the holiday season?

You might feel conflicted when you want to participate in the excitement and joy of the holidays, but at the same time, you don't want to participate or feel guilty for celebrating at all.

If you or someone you know are grieving this holiday season, here are some helpful tips to get you through this potentially difficult season.





1. OFFER YOURSELF SOME GRACE

One of the best things you can do for yourself is allow yourself to feel whatever it is you are feeling. You don't have to feel a certain way or do certain things to fit into the "holiday normal." It's okay for tears to come when you are sad or to vent when you are angry. Try not to fall into the belief that you have to do something a certain way just because it's the holidays.

It's okay to feel happy, too! Finding happiness and enjoying the holidays does not diminish how much you love and miss the person or thing not there to celebrate the holidays.

Don't feel guilty for the joy you do find this holiday.

2. BE KIND TO YOURSELF

It's essential to give your mind and body what it needs. Try not to take on more than you can handle, and do whatever feels right for you. If you're usually the family member to bring the turkey and think that you can't do it, ask someone else to take that on. Take care of yourself first.



3. ASK FOR AND ACCEPT HELP

The holidays are no time to fake strength and say that you're okay when you're really not. So many people are always wanting to help, but may not know how. If you need someone to help you make meals, shop, decorate, or anything else, this is a good time to speak up and make these needs known.

The same holds true for emotional needs. Friends and family may not know how to bring up your grief, and you have to tell them the best way to help you. If you want someone to listen to you, if you need advice, or just a shoulder to cry on, let them know.

4. MAKE A LIST

Check it twice. Grief makes it harder for us to concentrate and remember things. When you have a lot going on during the holidays, make a list even if you aren't usually a list-maker, and write things on the calendar to help keep you organized and less stressed.



5. MAKE A DIFFERENCE

So many people enjoy helping others, whether it be in large or small ways. We may drop our change in the Salvation Army buckets, purchase items an animal shelter needs, or donate to our favorite organization. Studies show that volunteering can be beneficial to our mental health, particularly as we age. You can also find a way to help another family member or friend who may need it. Helping improve the lives of others can help take the focus off your loss.

6. FIND WAYS TO REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES

Visit their grave or memorial site. Light a candle in their memory. Leave a seat open at the dinner table where they usually sat. You can share photos and memories of your loved one as well, and can find your own unique ways to remember your loved ones, whether it's alone or with family.

MORE RESOURCES

This guide only scratches the surface of dealing with grief during the holidays. Feel free to do your own research into other resources for a form of grief we didn't touch on, or email us or message us on Facebook so that we can include it in next year's edition.

There are so many valuable materials out there that can help you cope with whatever it is you are grieving. Regardless of the type of loss you've experienced, your grief is real, and it is valid.



- Tips for Coping With the Death of a Spouse
- The Grief of Losing a Parent Is Complex – Here's How to Start Navigating It
- Coping With the Sudden Death of a Child
- Grieving the Death of a Sibling
- Your Guide To Coping With The Loss Of A Loved One
- Bereavement: Grieving the Loss of a Loved One
- Pregnancy Loss: Processing the Pain of Miscarriage
- How to Cope with the Loss of a Beloved Pet
- Dealing with Relationship Breakups
- Coping with Separation and Divorce
- How to Cope When You Lost a Best Friend
- 7 Ways to Mentally Bounce Back After Losing Your Job
- Job Loss and Unemployment Stress
- Adjusting to Retirement: Handling the Stress and Anxiety
- Coping with a Life-Threatening Illness or Serious Health Event
- How to Cope with Traumatic Events
- Coping With Losing a Friend or Family Member to Suicide
- Grief Associated with Death through Homicide

If you feel overwhelmed by feelings of loss and hopelessness, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or chat with a counselor for emotional support and other services via web chat <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>



WE'RE HERE TO HELP

At Lawrence T. Miller Funeral Home, you will find caring people who understand the importance of family, not a large company just doing business. Everything we do is focused on helping your family plan for and cope with the loss of a loved one. We will continue to guide families in ways they can meaningfully commemorate the life of their loved ones.

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