



# Coping with Grief during the Holidays

*Surviving the holiday season is difficult for many of us, but for those living with the loss of a loved one, this time of year may be especially painful. Holidays are filled with nostalgia and traditions. We love to relive the memories of special moments in our lives. But, even the happiest of memories can be painful, not joyous, when we are grieving. We may need some extra help to survive this holiday season. Here are a few coping skills that may be helpful. These suggestions won't necessarily take the grief away, but they can help in managing the grief during this time of year.*

**Do what feels right** - It's up to you to decide which activities, traditions or events you can handle. Don't feel obligated to participate in anything that doesn't feel doable. It's okay to say no.

**Plan ahead** - Sometimes the anticipation is worse than the actual holiday. Create some activities in the days approaching a holiday so that you have something to look forward to. New activities might be easier, but familiar traditions might be comforting as well. Do what feels best for you.

**Scale back** - You might opt for minimal decorations at home and take a break from baking, shopping, etc. You could limit gatherings with only your closest friends and family. Do whatever feels safe and comfortable to you.

**Surround yourself with supportive people** - Make sure you have a group of people you can stay connected with during the holiday season. Be honest about how you'd like to do things this year. If you want to talk about your loved one, do so and let others know it's okay if they do, too.

**Acknowledge those who have passed on** - Honor your loved one by lighting candles for them, talking about them, make a donation to a charity in their name, create a special card or write them a letter, display their picture or place an item of theirs among holiday decorations. Pray for your loved one.

**Listen to your body** - If you need to cry, then cry. If you need to sleep, then do so. If you need to talk to someone, seek out someone who will listen. If you need time alone, then take the time. It is important for the grieving process that you accept and honor your feelings, whatever they may be.

**Lean into your Faith** - Listen to Jesus' words, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted", Matthew 5:4. Seek comfort in prayers, scripture and lean into your faith community for their love and support.

## ***Prayer to Our Lady of Sorrows***

Our mother of sorrows, with strength from above you stood by the cross, sharing in the sufferings of Jesus, and with tender care you bore him in your arms, mourning and weeping, We praise you for your faith, which accepted the life God planned for you. We praise you for your hope, which trusted that God would do great things in you. We praise you for your love in bearing with Jesus the sorrows of his passion. Holy Mary, may we follow your example, and stand by all your children who need comfort and love.

Mother of God, stand by us in our trials and care for us in our many needs.

Pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen!

For more information on resources, coping skills and support;

Contact your Parish Office

Visit [www.saginaw.org/grief-ministry](http://www.saginaw.org/grief-ministry)

Diocese of Saginaw Respect Life Office at 989-797-6652

***"Love does not end"***

1 Corinthians 13:8