



## Grief and the Holidays

### Crucial Self-Care Tips

#### 1. Be Aware of Your Feelings.

Grief comes in a variety of emotions, all of which can be particularly sensitive during holidays. Self-awareness can help with navigating the present moment. It's okay to feel sad, mad, irritable, and it is okay to feel happy. Name what you are feeling, and honor that feeling.

#### 2. It is Okay to Say "No".

Be cautious not to overwhelm yourself with social or familial obligations, it can be easy to do during this time of year. It's okay to give yourself permission not to host an event (even if you've "always done it before"). If you're not feeling up for going to a holiday party/get together/tradition/service/Zoom call, give yourself permission to say no if you need to. In doing so, you are taking care of yourself.

#### 3. Be Gentle With Yourself

You don't have to love this holiday season. The holidays throw us off our routines, and grief can be compounded. Try to find grace with yourself and maintain basic personal needs such as eating, drinking enough water, and resting. **Meet yourself where you are at.**  
*"Sometimes it's OK if the only thing you did today was breathe" (Yumi Sakugawa).*

#### 4. Ask for Support

If you're struggling, don't be afraid to reach out to safe people in your life for support. It can be helpful to think ahead about who your support people are so that you can have them on "speed-dial" if needed.

#### 5. Plan an Exit Strategy

Sometimes our tolerance is lower when we're grieving during this time of year, and it can be helpful to have some autonomy when you feel obligated to go to an event that you may not have the energy to be present for. If you go to an event, maybe drive yourself so that you can leave when you need to. If you go and can only muster staying for a few minutes, give yourself credit for going! It takes strength and bravery to do that. Give yourself credit for the accomplishment of going, and for listening to yourself and taking care of your needs when it's time to go.

#### 6. Permission to Change a Tradition

Normal has been turned upside-down. It would make sense then that holiday traditions also are "upside-down". Sometimes how we have done things in the past, just isn't right anymore. Because everything has changed. It may be that an old tradition is too hard to do now, and maybe a new tradition can begin. Give yourself permission to roll with such changes, and to be intentional about what changes you implement. Things can stay the same, and if they need to change what change would be helpful?

#### 7. Honor Your Person

It is important to allow yourself time and space to remember your person. What is something you can add to your holiday traditions that honors them, your connection with them, and your continued bond?