

MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

FINDING HOPE GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays can be a festive time of music, celebration, and decorations that are meant to bring joy to the season. However, for those that have experienced loss the holiday season can be the most painful time of year. If you are wondering how to get through the holidays without the presence of a loved one or co-worker, these strategies can help.



GRIEF IS HEALING

Trusting that grief is part of healing allows you to be open to experiencing the grief. Time doesn't heal the pain; it is what you do with the time. Avoid pretending the holidays don't exist or numbing yourself with alcohol or other substances which prolongs the anguish.

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Avoid letting others tell you what you must be doing during the holidays. If attending certain events or participating in an office event brings too many painful memories this year, allow yourself to say no. However, be respectful of how others choose to celebrate.

LOOK FOR WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

You will hear holiday music in waiting areas and shopping centers. You are likely to hear about co-workers planning celebrations and see holiday posts on social media. Pick things you can control. Decide how much or little you want to participate. Shop online VS in-store. Take a break from social media if you would like. Plan ahead. If you choose to involve yourself in activities, drive yourself so you can leave early if needed. Plan a private celebration with a trusted friend, co-worker or family member. Schedule therapy appointments in advance through your EAP.

EXPECT A RANGE OF EMOTIONS

The holidays alone bring a wide variety of emotions. This is the same with grief. There can be extremes. You may find yourself feeling sadness, guilt or joy all within a few moments. Observe your emotions without judging them. This means giving yourself space to feel emotions without deciding "this is how I should feel right now" or dwelling on thoughts such as "I shouldn't feel sad when everyone else is celebrating."

A NEW TRADITION

Give your grief a place in holiday traditions. Light a memorial candle or create a memorial ornament. You can alter or change old traditions if it "just isn't the same" without the presence of your loved one or co-worker. Grief is transformative. Some of it we can't control but other parts we can. Be open to trying a new tradition and decide for yourself afterwards if you wish to keep it. **Struggling? Now is the time to schedule private EAP counseling**



Your Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) provides private & confidential counseling
To schedule private and confidential counseling sessions:



1 800 342 5653



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