



GRIEF & LOSS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

By: Pam Bilusack

*With contributions from people who have attended
our Grief Support Groups.
BC Bereavement Helpline*



***It's the most
wonderful time
of the year...
or is it?***



Grief & Loss During the Holidays... and beyond

- Dealing with “firsts” can be extremely challenging.
- Feelings of grief are amplified.
 - Grief bursts - unexpected and emotional.
 - Feelings of isolation/loneliness.
- Dealing with different grieving styles.
 - Acknowledge that everyone grieves differently and there is no right or wrong way to grieve.
- How to manage traditions (old and new).
 - Making decisions that work for you.
- Cultural and societal expectations.
 - It’s often society that places these expectations on people and then we feel we need to meet those expectations.
 - Acknowledge that others may celebrate different than you and respect the differences.
 - Sometimes people may celebrate and you don’t or vice versa. How do you navigate this?
- Making decisions can be overwhelming.

Tips to Get **THROUGH** the Holidays

- Say **TENTATIVE** (don't overcommit yourself, easier to not attend something if you're not up for it).
- Set boundaries.
- Self care: emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally and socially.
- Create new traditions and hold onto old traditions you treasure (and/or want to hold onto).
- Order food in or go for a meal (release pressure).
- Decorate - or help friends decorate - or don't!
- Celebrate earlier or on different days.
- Unplug (from social media).
- Allow your feelings just as they are.
- Travel.



Tips to Get THROUGH the Holidays

- Be aware of possible activities, places or people who may impact your feelings negatively.
- Allow yourself to have fun and laugh and embrace those moments.
- Make a date with yourself to “walk” down memory lane.
- Spread love and hugs.
- Volunteer.
- Challenge yourself if you want to isolate.
 - Baby steps. Try things for short periods of time.
- Have a support system or reach out for support (family, friends, support groups, Helpline, counsellor, mentor...)



Ways to honour your person

- Continuing Bonds (say HELLO).
- Create a scrapbook or photobook. Connect with their life.
- Rituals/candles/photos.
- Have a spot at the table for them.
- Take turns sharing memories.
- Use a memory jar.
- Create game or trivia.
- Visit memorial site (if applicable).
- Make loved one's favourite food (eat or donate).
- Create or buy special decorations.
- Write a letter to a loved one or send them text (tribute pages).
- Watch their favourite movie (doesn't have to be a holiday one!)
- Turn their clothing, blanket, etc. into something you can remember them by.
- Play their favourite song/music.

BC Bereavement Helpline

WWW.BCBH.CA

- **Helpline**

- Generally open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9am-5pm; Wednesday 9am-8pm and Saturday 9am-1pm
- Holiday hours: Dec. 26-29 and Jan. 2-5, 10am-2pm
- Helpline: 604 -738-9950 or 1-877-779-2223
- Email contact@bcbh.ca

- **Traumatic Loss Grief Support**

- 8-week Homicide Grief Support Groups (online)
- Drop In Homicide Loss (Surrey - first Wed of each month, Dec. 6th next)
- 8-week Suicide Grief Support Groups (online)
- Suicide Loss Building Hope series (Dec. 6 and 13)
- 8-week Toxic Drug Poisoning Grief Group (Kamloops)

- **Pet Loss Peer Support** (every 2nd Thur of month, Dec. 14th next)

- **Traumatic Loss Facilitator Training**

- Provides an overview of grief and teaches the basics of facilitating a closed, 8-week support group for traumatic loss; homicide, suicide, a loss due to substance use (or any sudden, unexpected loss) in a mixed learning format.

Just Like Grief

by Angela Miller

There are no rules for surviving holiday grief.
Do what you need to do to survive.

Honour your loved one how YOU need to,
and do what feels best for your fragile, aching heart.

You are missing a huge piece of you, so do whatever
you need to do to find a sliver of peace.