

Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season

For many people, this holiday season will be their first to face an empty chair at the table because a loved one has recently passed away. Grief and loss can stir up a wellspring of emotions, from sorrow to guilt and anger. The holidays can be especially difficult to manage, as they will never quite be the same.

This is true not only for people whose loved ones have recently died. Those with family members who are estranged, ill, or live too far away to participate in cherished traditions may also experience “the empty chair.”

There are different ways to find peace and even moments of joy in the midst of sadness that may come and go during the holidays. Some suggestions during this season:



- Honor your loved one's memory by participating in a volunteer activity that he/she used to do, or attend a religious service or other event, such as a “Tree of Light” ceremony held by a hospice or faith-based organization.
- Remember your loved one with a special keepsake, wreath or centerpiece, or perhaps a candle that is lit during the holiday. During the holiday meal with family and friends, make a toast in memory of your loved one and share a special memory. Ask others to share their favorite memories too.
- Give yourself permission to grieve your loss and to change your family traditions to adapt to the new reality. If you don't feel up to doing the things you usually do during the holidays, such as hosting a large dinner or traveling to holiday parties, consider other alternatives that are less stressful.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in addiction recovery services, primary care, or mental health care for children or adults, contact InterCommunity. To receive services at any of our Hartford or East Hartford locations, please call 860-569-5900.