



## *Suggestions for Surviving Holiday Bereavement*

1. Allow yourself to acknowledge your grief. Celebrations will include sorrowful moments as well as joyful ones.
2. Let family members and friends know how you feel and what you need, such as time with others, time alone, time to remember, to talk.
3. Consider taking time for yourself, as well as for your family, for thoughts, expressions of feelings, memories or symbolic expressions of the person who has died, such as a candle in memory, sharing photo albums, a toast, serving the deceased's favorite food.
4. Acknowledge that you do not have to live up to your own or others' expectations for the holiday season. Know your own limits: You may not want to entertain, send cards, or shop. Decide what you can do comfortably and ask others for help.
5. Don't be afraid to make changes. Recreate rituals and traditions. Allow yourself to do things differently.
6. Avoid excessive use of alcohol and overeating; they tend to bring on depression.
7. Build in times to relax and to exercise during the holidays.
8. Consider doing something for others: call someone you know is alone; adopt a needy family for the holidays; invite a guest; share something with those who have assisted you, as a thank you.
9. Plan something you can look forward to in January and February to diminish post-holiday letdown.
10. If stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness become overwhelming, reach out for help. You may want to consult a mental health professional.