

# Grief During the Holidays: How to Cope

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## Transcript

*Dr. Erin Gallagher:* Some of the simplest things can trigger waves of grief, such as grocery shopping for one, seeing a parent with their child, weekend or evening plans, or just waking up. It is no surprise, then, that as we head into the holiday seasons, the intensity of our grief can peak, or even surprise us. For many, it's hard to comprehend how the world moves on when we've lost someone significant in our life.

If you know someone who may be grieving, acknowledge that this may be a challenging time for them and ask how you can support them. This person may be in your circle of friends, family, class, or workplace. Trust me, you are not going to be the one to make them sad. They are already thinking about their loved one.

For those grieving, there are many potential strategies for experiencing the grief and joy that can come with the holiday seasons.

- Reach out proactively to your supports, including friends, family, or healthcare provider.
- Encourage open communication about your loved one, such as everyone stating something they miss about them during a meal together.
- Look at old photos or create a memory box that can be open during the holidays and other times of the year.
- Create a schedule that will keep you socially and physically active, so you have things to look forward to throughout the holiday period.
- Cook a meal.
- Pursue an activity.
- Support a cause.
- Volunteer or plant a tree that your loved one would appreciate.
- Visit or create a monument or ceremony for your loved one.
- Talk to your loved one or write them a letter to express how you are feeling and how you hope to continue even just a piece of their legacy.
- Practice mindfulness when you can. Focusing on your senses in the present and gratitude for what is around you.
- Create new memories and traditions.
- Spend time with people who can accept and validate your grief and have an exit plan for if it becomes too overwhelming.

If you are worried about the level of grief that you are experiencing, or that somebody you know is experiencing, please reach out to a healthcare professional to get the help that you need.

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