

Three Cs for Coping with the Holidays



Look towards moments of remembrance, light and thanksgiving

Today, during my daily coffee run, I noticed Gingerbread lattes are back and my coffee came in that cheery, red Starbucks cup. Ah, the sights and sounds that indicate the holiday season is here—turkeys for sale, trees on display, toy catalogs arriving in the mail. The season brings an expectation of joyful gatherings and family traditions – yet for those who are grieving it can be a stressful and especially painful time. For some, the sense of loss may be shared by family and friends, but for others it may be more private. Even years later, the loss of a loved one may evoke strong emotions and memories during the holiday season.

This is a time when the world expects happiness and excitement when in reality the bereaved person may feel lonely, sad, and depressed. If you find yourself dreading the holidays or experiencing a wave of sadness or anxiety during an activity, you are not alone. Here are few sugges-

tions from team members at Chesapeake Life Center for coping with the holidays.

Claim your feelings. Everyone grieves in their own unique way and may find different customs and rituals helpful. Find ways to express your emotions by talking, writing, and /or singing. Be gentle and non-judgmental with yourself. It is okay to cry and it is also okay to laugh and enjoy life's special moments.

Take Control where you can. Do what is best for you, not what others have told you to do or what others think you should do. Select the traditions and activities that you feel are helpful or meaningful and give yourself permission to change traditions or limit some of the usual activities.

Communicate. Share your thoughts with loved ones and suggest ways they may assist you this holiday sea-

son. It is okay to mention your loved one and share memories. In an effort to avoid upsetting you, people around you may avoid speaking of your loved one. You may need to explicitly tell them that you want to hear your loved one's name spoken aloud and to share memories, even if they bring tears. This is especially important to remember for children.

Consider taking advantage of support groups and Hope Full Holiday seminars where you can make connections with others that can identify with how you feel.

Our expectations are sometimes worse than the actual experience. Grief emotions naturally ebb and flow, so look towards those moments of remembrance, light and thanksgiving as you approach this holiday season.

Chesapeake Life Center

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chesapeakelifecenter.org

Hope Full Holidays

A seminar to offer support, honor memories and explore coping strategies during the holiday season.

Saturday, November 22
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Prince George's office
9500 Arena Drive, Suite 250
Largo, MD 20774

Saturday, December 6
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Anne Arundel office.
90 Ritchie Highway
Pasadena, MD 21122

To learn more and register, please call 888.501.7077. Cost is \$10.

