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Tips for Getting Through the Holidays

Practical guidance for grieving people and the ones who love them

🌟 The holidays and special occasions can stir up many feelings after a death. Traditions, gatherings, and reminders may be painful. You do not have to do this perfectly. Use the ideas that fit and set aside the rest. Be gentle with yourself.

🌟 Before the season

- Make a simple plan. Decide what you will keep, change, or skip this year. Give yourself permission to change your mind.
- Set clear boundaries for invites, travel, and hosting. You can leave early, arrive late, or say no without guilt.
- Create two plans. Plan A if you feel up to it. Plan B if the day is hard.
- Tell a few close people what helps and what hurts. Ask for practical help with meals, errands, or childcare.
- Include children and teens in decisions. Ask what they would like to keep and what they would like to change.

🕯️ Honouring your person

- Choose one gentle ritual. Light a candle, share a story, or cook their favourite food.
- Make a small memory space. Place photos, ornaments, or notes in one spot that feels comforting.
- Do one act of giving in their honour. Donate, volunteer, or help someone the way they would have.

👉 Navigating gatherings

- Have an exit plan. Drive yourself, set a time limit, or agree on a code word with a support person.
- Let people know you may cry, laugh, or take breaks. All of it is normal.

- If certain conversations are hard, prepare a few phrases. For example, “Thank you for asking. I am taking things one hour at a time.”
- Limit alcohol if it makes feelings harder to manage. Choose water or a warm drink instead.

Caring for your body and mind

- Protect the basics. Sleep, nutrition, movement, hydration, and fresh air support your energy and mood.
- Plan short pockets of rest. A ten-minute walk, a bath, or quiet time in another room can help.
- Use coping tools that work for you. Journaling, art, prayer, breathing, or talking to someone safe.
- Take breaks from social media and holiday movies if they are painful. Choose calmer input.
- Notice small moments of comfort and let yourself enjoy them without guilt.

For families with kids

- Use clear, honest language that matches their age. Invite questions and repeat information as needed.
- Keep some routine. Regular meals, sleep, and school days help children feel secure.
- Offer choices. They can join a ritual, make a memory ornament, or sit nearby and watch.
- Watch for signs they are struggling. If concerns persist, reach out to a pediatrician or grief program.

If the day is tough

- Choose the smallest next step. Drink water. Step outside. Text one supportive person.
- Use a grounding skill. Name five things you see. Feel your feet on the floor. Breathe in for four, out for six.
- It is okay to change plans or leave early. Your well-being matters.
- If you feel unsafe, contact local emergency services or dial 911 right away.

Grief changes holidays and other special times. Let the day be what it is. Keep what helps, release what does not, and return to traditions in your own time. 💪 Be Your Own Hero. The Grief Squad Community and Solace are here for you any time you need support.

My Holiday Plan

A simple worksheet to guide your choices

Grief can make holidays unpredictable. Use this worksheet to map out what feels possible. Plan A is for when you have more energy or support. Plan B is for when the day feels harder. Both are valid and both give you permission to choose what you need in the moment.

Category	Plan A (if I feel up to it)	Plan B (if it feels too hard)
Where I will spend the day		
People I want to be with		
Traditions or rituals to include		
Ways to honour my person		
Food or meals		
Exit plan if I need space		
Who I can reach out to for support		

You may not use everything you write here. That is okay. Having options helps you feel more prepared. Share your plan with someone you trust so they can support you on the day.