



Finding Enjoyment in the Holidays

Between October 31st and January 6th there are several holidays that are celebrated around the world and in the USA. The most well recognized is Christmas but also includes Halloween/All Souls Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, New Year's and Epiphany.

Whatever holiday is important to you/your family and for whatever reason, religion, culture, family tradition, an element of sadness can occur if members of the family are not able to share in the celebrations together. With some discussion and planning we can all still find enjoyment during the holidays. Some suggestions include:

Discussion: It is important to be honest with ourselves, our family and friends about our feelings and our capabilities in enjoying the holidays. Our feelings and capabilities will depend on the type of loss we are experiencing, the duration and timing. Once we are honest with ourselves we can discuss how we would like to celebrate the holidays with family and friends.

Some things to consider include:

- What activities and traditions do you want to maintain this year?
- What activities and traditions are too difficult and need to be suspended for another year?
- Who will be the organizer of specific activities and traditions? You may decide to "pass off" some activities to others but keep some that you still provide.
- Do you need a slower pace this year due to emotional and energy levels
- Is it possible to move some activities to after the primary holidays to slow down the pace and offset the "let down" feeling after the holidays
- Do monetary /gift giving adjustments need to be made

Planning: Once an honest discussion has occurred specific plans can be made that meet your needs and also include the needs of the other family members and friends.

Planning might include:

- Locations and location changes for specific events and activities
- Designated, responsible persons for events/activities
- Cost and cost sharing
- Expectation adjustments
- Addition of new traditions
- Deletion of other traditions
- Ways to commemorate the person no longer with you through activities, foods, storytelling, etc.

Through honest discussion and cooperative planning you and your family are able to create a special and meaningful holiday celebration which you can enjoy even with the sadness that will occur when missing loved ones.