

HIGHMARK

CARING PLACE 

finding hope in grief

Grief and  
celebrations

# Staying close through holidays



# When a special day is coming up

After a loved one dies, special occasions can become more difficult. Grief can feel heavier. Gathering as a group just highlights who's missing. It's common for people to feel alone or different, even in a group.

Remind yourself that everyone grieves differently. Try to identify and release expectations of keeping celebrations the same. Allow yourself to choose freely between keeping a tradition and exploring new things. Often anticipation of the special occasion can be more difficult than the day itself.



# Finding the energy

## **Find time beforehand to plan your activities.**

Focus on your needs, and the needs of your children. Decide with your family what traditions you'd like to continue, and what to let go. Invite your children into the process.

## **Know your limits.**

Grieving takes energy. Be gentle with yourself and your children. Try to find time for yourself and whoever else might need some breaks from socializing.

## **Seek support.**

Find people who understand and allow you to express your feelings.

## **Manage expectations.**

For many people, the expectation to be cheerful on so-called special days brings stress instead of joy. There's no perfect way to deal with this. You can only do your best. If you need to, say "no."

# Getting together and remembering

Designate a time and space during celebrations and holidays to remember a missed loved one.

- At a traditional gathering, someone might say, "We're remembering dad today and wishing that he were here celebrating with us."
- On a loved one's birthday, you might light a candle, buy flowers, cook their favorite meal, or visit their grave.
- At an important life event like graduation, you can talk about how proud your loved one would have been.





By addressing the hurt and loss aloud, you give feelings that are already present a way to be expressed. Shared moments help ease the heartache. And you're showing your child that while a loved one may have died, they aren't forgotten.

**" What we have once enjoyed  
and deeply loved we can never  
lose, for all that we love deeply  
becomes a part of us . "**

**— Helen Keller**



## Helping grieving children and families heal over a lifetime

Our mission is to create a world of compassionate communities where all people can find hope and healing after the death of a loved one. We provide grief support for families and individuals of all ages through peer groups, education, and advocacy.

### Where to find us

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