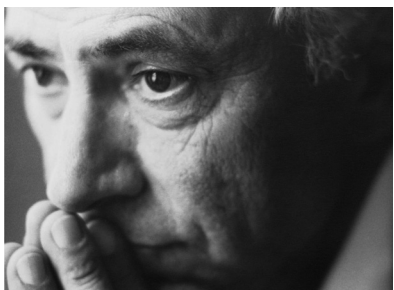


## Coping with the Holidays after the Loss of a Loved One



The weeks between Thanksgiving and the New Year can be both joyful and stressful. While we often find warmth and comfort in our family traditions, for someone who has recently experienced the death of a loved one, family traditions can make their grief all the more poignant, and tackling the season's "to dos" can seem an impossible chore. But there are things that can be done to help those that grieve cope with the holidays.

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) offers the following suggestions for those grieving this holiday season:

**Take care of yourself, both physically and mentally.** The pace of the holiday season can wear anyone out, but carrying the weight of loss on your shoulders can amplify your stress. Make sure you are getting enough sleep, eating properly, and taking time for yourself.

**Unburden yourself when and where it's possible.** If participating in traditions brings you comfort, by all means do so, but don't be afraid to curb how much you take on this season. For example, perhaps you can be a guest at the family holiday party rather than hosting it this year.

**Create a holiday plan.** Decide which family traditions you want to take part in this year and plan out your participation. A plan can help you avoid getting caught off guard by unexpected activities or tasks.

**Share your memories with others.** The holidays surround us with fond memories. Don't be reluctant to talk about those memories, and the special person who died by name. Sharing memories of your loved one with others can help ebb the loneliness you may be feeling.

**Above all else, do what's right for you.** Your family and friends care about you and will most likely offer advice on what you should do. However, you are the only one that can fully understand what you need to make it through the holidays. Take time to outline your needs, then share your plans with your family and friends. Keeping your expectations realistic and letting yourself rely on family and friends will help you through your holiday grief.

For additional information visit [www.nfda.org](http://www.nfda.org) or contact a local NFDA funeral director about holiday aftercare programs. NFDA funeral homes around the country are participating in a national consumer education campaign, *For A Life Worth Celebrating<sup>sm</sup>*, in an effort to help consumers make wise and informed decisions related to funeral service.

NFDA is the leading funeral service association, serving more than 20,300 funeral directors who represent more than 12,200 funeral homes in the United States and other countries.