



The Grieving Journey

from Greene County Council on Aging Winter 2023

Holiday Grieving

December is here, and so are holiday celebrations. Because you have lost someone significant in your life, you may not be in the mood for gatherings and cheer this year. None the less, you will be aware of the holidays or be invited to be with family or friends at some point. When that invitation comes, how will you deal with it? Perhaps you will feel comforted to be with family, and perhaps you won't. Either way, the holiday experience will be different after a significant loss.

Here are some ideas for those grieving that will help to stay on the path toward healing, summarized from James E. Miller's "How Will I Get Through the Holidays?"

1. Accept, in advance, that this will be a painful time no matter what you do. Many grieving people report being glad they gathered with others, even though it was difficult and not at all like it used to be.
2. Allow yourself to feel what you feel. Don't allow others to unrealistically try to cheer you up. After such a loss it is important to claim your feelings. Be real with others about how you are doing and what you need.
3. Express your emotions to someone who will listen and be present with you. You may also want to clarify your feelings by writing them down on paper.
4. Make a plan for how you want to approach the holidays and think about what most concerns you. Perhaps take on less than usual. Have someone else host the gathering. Consider how much time you need alone and how much time you would like to spend with others.
5. When you figure out what you need, make it happen. Ask for what you need, create new rituals, exercise and eat well – this is a time for you to take care of yourself. Be flexible and forgiving with yourself.
6. Have multiple small get togethers if a large gathering will be too much to handle. Be sure to



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Holiday Grieving Continued

spend some time with others during the month to shop, talk, eat, or create.

7. Find ways to remember by telling stories about the deceased, wear a piece of their jewelry or clothing, offer photos to family members, have a special candle that you can light on holidays, make donations in your loved one's name.
8. It's normal to feel alone in the midst of a holiday gathering when you are there without your loved one, especially for the first time. It's okay to go home early. It's okay to be quiet and just observe. There is no wrong way to be at this time of year when you are missing someone special.

*And lastly,
remember that it is
okay to cry."*
— Richard Kauffman



You have had many and great sadnesses.
But, please, consider whether these great
sadnesses
have not gone right to the center of yourself?
Whether much in you has not altered,
whether you have not somewhere,
at some point of your being,
undergone a change while you were sad?
For our sadnesses are the moments when
something new
has entered into us, something unknown;
our feelings grow mute in the perplexity,
everything in us withdraws, a stillness
comes,
and the new, which no one knows,
stands in the midst of it
and is silent.

~Rainer Maria Rilke

The Grieving Journey is a Greene County Council on Aging quarterly publication to accompany you in your time of bereavement after the loss of a significant person in your life.

We hope you find this publication helpful, and welcome your comments and ideas for future issues.
Let us know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

GCCOA Grief Support Group

Group meetings are open to all those who have lost a loved one. Meetings are on the 2nd Monday of the month, 10am until noon, Peace Lutheran Church, 3530 Dayton Xenia Road, Beavercreek (lower level). Participation is limited and advance registration is required. Please call the Council to learn more.