

not to expect too much of yourself or those around you makes good sense but often need planning.

Christmas is traditionally seen as a time to spend with family and close friends. This can highlight the fact that a special person is not there, the traditions of Christmas such as Christmas carols and gift giving, family and partner togetherness, Christmas parties and functions, Church services, can give the impression that everyone else is happy except you. You may need to challenge the 'Brady bunch' vision of families at Christmas and find a way of experiencing Christmas that has meaning for you... for some it may mean not celebrating at all.



Coping Strategies

- ▶ Do something in memory of the person who has died.
- ▶ Light a special candle to burn during the Christmas meal.
- ▶ Make or buy a special decoration to hang on the tree in memory.
- ▶ Make a toast to the person, share anecdotes. Don't be afraid to laugh as you remember some of the good times.
- ▶ Play a special song or music
- ▶ Write a letter or card to the person who has died, don't be concerned if you want to talk out loud to them....do it.
- ▶ Some bereaved parents buy a small gift for the age their child would be had they lived and put it under the tree at one of the charity, church or supermarket trees.
- ▶ Some people like to visit the grave side or a special location to sit and remember.
- ▶ Plan your time so that you are under as little stress as possible. Plan your 'escape' if need be, don't over commit. Rehearse a simple explanation of why you may not attend a function
- ▶ Ask for some assistance with preparations including going shopping - many people experience panic attacks in supermarkets. If this is a problem for you learn some simple breathing techniques to assist with the panic and take someone as support when you go out - the panic will settle with time.



You may need to change the routine and traditional way you do things. Perhaps have a picnic lunch, go to the park, go to the beach, change the venue spend it quietly, go to different church service, help out at a charity lunch.

- ▶ Let your friends and family know that you need to take things slow and that may mean taking each day as it comes.
- ▶ Share the memories with someone else, the photos and the stories. You may cry and you may laugh, it is much healthier for you to express your feelings than to push it all down.
- ▶ Seek professional help if needed. Tri-City Psychology Services Inc. offers grief counselling and appointments can be made by calling us at 604 939 9988.
- ▶ Do something for yourself - treat yourself to a massage, indulge in a favorite food, buy yourself a present.
- ▶ Ensure some quiet time to if you want to you can simply sit with your memories and grief.

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