

COPING WITH GRIEF

During the Holidays and Other Special Days

MISSION

The mission of Arbor Hospice is to give comfort, assurance and care to families and patients who have life-limiting illnesses, and to educate and nurture others in this care.

"HOW CAN I GET THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS?"

There is no single answer to this commonly asked question – simply do what is comfortable for you.

DO WHAT IS COMFORTABLE

The key is finding out what is right for you. Some people want to be surrounded with the familiar and spend time with family and friends. Others prefer to avoid familiar sights and sounds. And still others find that creating something brand new is best for them. Change can be good and difficult at the same time.

Here are some tips to help you discover what is best for you:

- Remember that the key to surviving the holidays is to PLAN ahead, for surprises may evoke even greater feelings of loss.
- Be aware that this might be a difficult time for you. The additional stress of the holidays (or another special day) may affect you emotionally, cognitively, and physically. This is a normal reaction, and it is important to be prepared for these feelings.
- Recognize that the holidays will not be the same. If you try and keep everything exactly as it was, you will most likely be disappointed. Be prepared to be flexible, and remember that doing things a little differently can still preserve some continuity with the past.
- Be careful not to isolate yourself. It is important to take time for yourself, but don't cut yourself off from the support of family and friends. The holidays may affect other family members as well. Talk over your plans. Respect their choices and needs too, and compromise, if necessary.
- Avoid additional stress during this time. Decide what is special and important, and what can be missed this year. Consider whether you can successfully cope in those upcoming holiday events or situations. Be easy on yourself – remember you can't please everyone.