

SUPPORTING YOUR GRIEF AND LOSS DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

There are many reasons you may be experiencing grief and loss this year. You may have lost a loved one recently or perhaps some years ago. You might be physically separated from your loved one this year for reasons outside of your control. Did you know that significant changes to the health and wellbeing of yourself or your loved one can lead to feelings of grief and loss too? Whatever the reason, we are here to support you.

While grief is a universally shared response to loss that many of your peers will understand, the experience is unique to you. There is no time limit, schedule or linear pattern to grief. No two people will grieve in the exact same way. It is important to honour your own process for grieving, holding space for your feelings to unfold and understanding that the way you grieve is just as your body and mind intend.

The holiday season can be especially challenging for those experiencing grief and loss. It is a time of heightened emotions, connection and activity. It is important to have good support this holiday season so that you can take care of yourself.

We have put together our top 5 tips for coping with grief and loss during the holiday season;

Build your village of support

Who is in your village, how do you connect with them and where are the gaps? Do you have family and friends around you during the holiday season to support you on your journey? Do you connect with other women experiencing grief and loss? If not, there could be a Families of Veterans Guild social club or wellbeing event near you.

Practice regular self-care

Self-care is crucial on your grief and loss journey. It doesn't have to be elaborate or lengthy which may put more pressure on you. Self-care can be as simple as a 5-minute guided meditation, a bath with your favourite essential oils, 10-minutes of gratitude journaling, a walk around the block, doing some gardening or being in nature. Setting realistic goals for self-care makes it more achievable. Set yourself a goal for 5-minutes of self-care each day in the lead up to Christmas.

Be honest about your feelings

You might like to let your family or friends know when you are feeling little down or overwhelmed this holiday season. Give them the opportunity to wrap you in love and remind you just how special you are to them. Share stories of your loved one or the life you had planned.



FAMILIES OF VETERANS GUILD

It can be challenging to share our deepest feelings however it is through vulnerability that connection thrives. Who can you call today to share your feelings?

Rituals matter

Family rituals are special events you practice regularly. They are mindful and intentional and support you to stay connected. Rituals during the holiday season might be decorating the Christmas tree, hosting a family gathering or the exchanging of gifts. Rituals can be challenging to maintain after the loss of a loved one. Continuing these rituals can help support you through changing and challenging times so perhaps you can plan ways to continue your family rituals. Who can you invite into your sacred space to share rituals with?

Ask for help

Be specific in the support you require. Ask for help early and often. You might be surprised by the amount of help you receive when you ask for it. You may have people in your life who are waiting for you to ask for help. Perhaps they aren't sure of your needs. You may need help with meal preparation, housework or garden maintenance now that your loved one is no longer able to share the load. Tell those in your village of support and ask if they can meet your needs today, tomorrow or in the future.

If you find that your experience of grief and loss affects your capacity to perform daily routine functions, you may want to consider seeking professional support via your GP or the below.

Services available during the holiday season:

Open Arms: 1800 011 046

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

Lifeline: 13 11 14

