Mental Health Ireland

Loss at Christmas



The holiday season can be an especially challenging time for those of us who are grieving, as they're often full of reminders of loved ones who are no longer here. These suggestions aim to honour the memory of your loved one while also helping you navigate your own emotions and find moments of peace.

Have an exit plan from social gatherings

Plan to attend gatherings with an 'exit buddy' who understands if you need to leave early. Let your host know you may need to step out for some air or leave early. Having a plan can reduce anxiety and pressure.

Include them in your rituals

Keep a cherished holiday tradition they enjoyed or create a new one in their honour. This could be lighting a candle for them, baking their favourite dessert, or listening to their favourite music.



Connect with others

Join a grief support group in your area or an online group, to connect with others who understand. Visit the Irish Hospice Foundation for support and services.

Spend quiet time with friends

Invite a friend for a relaxed coffee or walk, with no pressure for conversation unless you feel like it. Friends who are comfortable with silence can be especially comforting, allowing you to share company without expectations.

Have healthy self-expectations

Shift focus to what feels peaceful and manageable, whether it is a quiet cup of tea in the morning, a gentle walk, or cozying up with a good book. Embrace the calm moments and allow yourself to feel grounded without the pressure to feel festive.

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