

Dealing with grief *during the holidays*

Many people think they are supposed to be happy during the holidays. You may even feel guilty if you're not "choosing joy." But these high expectations can cause even more stress during an already stressful season.

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is a normal human response. It can happen anytime, especially during the holidays. When you lose someone or something that's important to you, you can experience grief.

Grief is different for everyone. It can cause sadness, anger, fear, guilt and many other emotions. You may also have physical signs like:

- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Sleep changes
- Feeling like you can't breathe
- Appetite changes



WHAT TO DO

When you experience a loss, you need to feel grief in your own way. You can do this by:

- Allowing yourself to feel whatever you feel.
- Taking care of yourself. Try to get regular sleep and eat healthy foods. Exercise can help you relieve stress too.
- Talking to others. A trusted friend or family member can help you get your feelings out.
- Writing it down. If you don't want to talk to someone, try writing down your feelings and thoughts.
- Avoid big decisions. Try to wait a year after a loss before you decide to move, change jobs or make other big life changes.

If you feel grief this holiday season, ask for help. A counselor, therapist or support group may help you feel better. If these things don't help, talk to your doctor.

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians