

## Grief during the Holidays

Holidays are a time of family gatherings or friends getting together. But when your loved one is no longer alive, the feeling of aloneness is accentuated as everyone else seems to have people to hug, presents to make or buy for dear ones.

**Thinking about what it means for you and a bit of planning could help you.  
Choose, Communicate, Compromise (Ken Doka)**

- Give yourself permission, your feelings are normal: set limits, set boundaries, say no, have a plan B.
- Communicate with your family, your friends on what you might decide to do, and let them know that your plans might change at the last minute.
- Evaluate what you have done in the past and imagine what it will be like if you preserve the tradition, if you modify it just a bit or if you decide to completely let go of it. Run scenarios in your head a few times and take time to acknowledge how it feels in your body.
- If you respond to an invitation, communicate with the host that you might feel the need to leave at any moment. It might be best to drive yourself rather than being dependent on others or you could pick a trusted member of your family or friend who can support you during the gathering and drive you home if that is what you need.
- Remember that you have choices in front of you and you don't have to do what others tell you: it's ok to turn away from a gathering and choose to spend time alone, but let a trusted friend know that you are choosing to be alone yet might want to reach out.
- Enjoy the moments when you notice you are actually enjoying yourself.

