



## GRIEF and the HOLIDAYS

### *Accept Your Limitations*

The number of decisions you have to make during the holidays along with the family and social pressure that accompanies them can be overwhelming.

Decisions to deal with:

1. To accept or decline party and dinner invitations.
2. What about cooking and baking?
3. Should the house be decorated?
4. What would be best for the children?
5. What would be best for me?
6. What to do about traditions – forget them for this year, try them, or develop new ones?
7. Should a visit be made to the cemetery that day?
8. How will I ever get out of bed that morning?

Do not let these decisions make you feel worse. Choose a few to deal with at a time so as not to overwhelm yourself.

The following suggestions come from bereaved individuals who memorialized their loved one or started new traditions.

- Purchase a small evergreen tree from a nursery, decorate it and replant it after Christmas.
- Light special memorial candles each day during the holidays or use one larger candle and light it each day.
- Display a single fresh flower during the holidays.
- Have a special time when the family share holiday memories of your deceased loved one.
- Offer a dinner prayer or toast to your loved one.
- Purchase a gift for your loved one and then donate it to a charity.
- Hang a special Christmas stocking in memory of the loved one.
- Give money in the amount you would have spent on gifts to a charity in the deceased's name.
- Celebrate a holiday on another day such as Christmas on New Year's Day.
- Focus on helping others.

Although these special tributes may cause some tears, they are usually helpful and therapeutic in your struggle to get through the holidays.