

BRAVING THE HOLIDAYS

# holidays

With good reason, holiday seasons are often among the most emotionally difficult of times for people who are in mourning. Holidays are intended to be a time of great joy, family togetherness, gift giving, and thankfulness, yet, if someone in your life has recently died, holidays can evoke extreme sadness, loneliness and emptiness.

Although holidays may be difficult no matter what you try to do or where you go, a new approach might open doors to the celebration of the memory of your loved one.



**The holidays can be a time for opening the gifts of special memories. We offer the following celebration as our gift to you and your family. Gather family and friends to share in this loving tribute.**

**Select five people, each to read one passage.**

*“As we light these four candles in honor of ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’ We light one for our grief, one for our courage, one for our memories and one for our love.”*

#### LIGHT THE THIRD CANDLE

*“This third candle is a light to all of our memories of ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’ To the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other, the silly things we did, the caring and the joy ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ gave us.”*

#### LIGHT THE FIRST CANDLE

*“The light of this first candle represents our grief. The pain of our loss is intense, but it reminds us of the depth of our love for ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’”*

#### LIGHT THE FOURTH CANDLE

*“This fourth candle is the light of our love. As we enter this holiday season, day by day, we cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’ We give thanks for the gift their life brought to each of us. We will love him/her always.”*

#### LIGHT THE SECOND CANDLE

*“The light of this second candle represents our courage to confront our sorrow; to comfort each other; to change our lives.”*

*By Nancy Moeller, LSW, CADG  
Conley Outreach Community Service  
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WHAT BRINGS COMFORT

# comfort

#### *Set Limits For Yourself*

Look to simplify rather than overwhelm yourself. Do only as much as you can manage emotionally and physically.

#### *Avoid The Holiday?*

Choosing not to celebrate is an option. However, you may find it feels better to at least acknowledge your loss and your loved one in some special and meaningful way.

#### *Express Your Feelings*

Sharing the vulnerabilities of your emotions with others who are grieving your loss, brings strength to all.

#### *Break From Tradition?*

Traditions which emphasize the absence of your loved one may not be appropriate this year. If you do keep with certain traditions, allow for minor changes, such as where you spend the holiday or with whom.

#### *Ask For What You Need*

Unless you tell them, other people cannot know what you need or are feeling. Ask for help with shopping, entertaining, cooking and cleaning.

#### *New Traditions*

Creating new rituals may be more healing for you and the rest of the family than rekindling past activities. Involving friends and family may help heal their grief as well.

#### *Resist Isolation*

The love and the enjoyment of being with those who love you can nourish and aid you in healing.