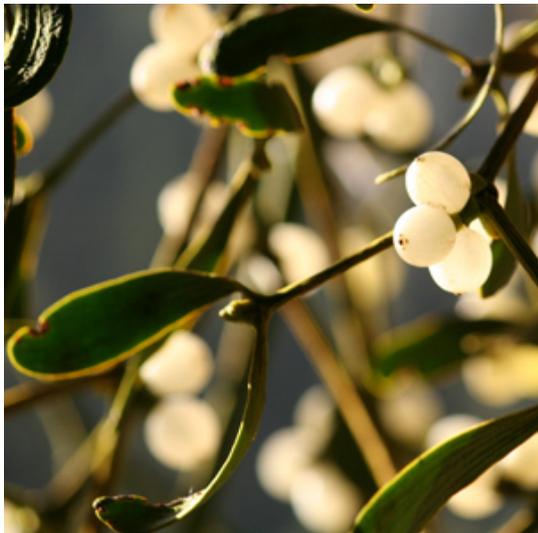


While many people look forward to yearly traditions, gatherings with family and friends, and the general spirit of the season, the holidays may emphasize feelings of loss and loneliness for those who have lost someone special.

The holidays, especially the first ones after the death of a loved one, can be particularly hard.

Often, friends and family members are unsure how to act or what to say. For fear of doing the wrong thing, people often avoid grieving friends who need their support the most.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization offers these practical and considerate tips which we would like to share with you:



Be supportive if the person wants to break tradition and do things differently this year.

- Offer to help with baking or cleaning. These tasks can often seem overwhelming.
- Ask if you can lend a hand with seasonal decorating.
- Volunteer to help with holiday shopping, or offer catalogs and suggestions of online shopping sites.
- Invite the person to attend a religious service with you.
- Extend an invitation to your home during the holidays.
- Help prepare and mail holiday cards.
- Ask the person if he or she is interested in volunteering with you. Doing something for someone else may help the person feel better.
- Make a donation in memory of the person who died.
- Never tell someone to “get over it.” Instead, give the person hope that, eventually, he or she will enjoy the holidays again.
- If your friend wants to talk about their feelings or the person who died, be comfortable listening. Active listening from friends is an important step for healing.
- Remind the person that you are thinking of him or her – and the loved one who died.

In general, the best way to help those who are grieving is to let them know you care.

For more information about dealing with grief, or to find a hospice in your area, visit NHPCO's Caring Connections Web site at www.caringinfo.org or call their HelpLine at 800-658-8898.