

## *Specific Help Family and Friends Can Offer...*

- Bake a few extra goodies and bring them over so the grieving person doesn't need to bake or buy.
- Wrap a few gifts for them. Sometimes even the simplest of tasks is hard to do when grieving.
- Make a special casserole and deliver it. Then, pick up the dish at another time for a second visit.
- Offer to drive the bereaved to the mall or grocery store. Driving can be a challenge for some.
- Invite them for a cup of coffee.
- Shovel snow or mow the lawn if possible.
- Offer to take them to the cemetery.
- Attend worship with the grieving person if they participate. Having someone they can depend on is vital.

- **Listen.**



*The grieving process can be especially difficult during special holidays or on a date of significance.*

*Please call on us any time for encouragement and support.*



# *Happy Holidays*

 **AKRON GENERAL  
VISITING NURSE SERVICE**  
*Hospice & Palliative Care*

*Hospice of Visiting Nurse Service*  
3358 Ridgewood Road  
Akron, OH 44333  
(330) 665-1455 or (800) 335-1455  
[www.vnsa.com](http://www.vnsa.com)

*Bereavement Coordinator*  
(330) 668-4662 or  
(800) 335-1455, Ext. 4662

Our Purpose is to alleviate suffering, engender hope, promote living and facilitate grieving among patients with serious or life-limiting illnesses, their families and their communities.

 *Hospice of Visiting Nurse Service*  
**Center for Loss and Hope**  
*Bereavement & Spiritual Care*

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## Tips to Help You Through Your Holidays

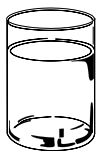
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- Remember the person you love. Do not try to “put him/her out of your mind.”
- Remind yourself that you do not need to please everyone around you.

■ Say “no” if you do not want to do something. If the other person is not pleased, that is alright for now.

**“NO!”**

- If the thought of what you used to do during a holiday is overwhelming, cut back on your activities. Make new plans that are not so involved.
- Acknowledge your loved one in some formal manner. Purposely noting your loved one may help everyone recognize and admit to the person’s importance.



- Drink water. You’ve heard it before, but it is true, water is a healthy drink.
- Cut back a bit on the cookies. Yes, they are delicious, but sugar gives you a quick energy lift, then a sharp decline. Emotionally you may not need the sharp decline.
- If your faith or spiritual life has been important in the past, reconnect and stay involved with that.

■ Exercise — even for a few minutes. This can reduce stress and begin to give a feeling of control.



■ Be kind to yourself after your holidays. Make plans to do something special — maybe lunch with a friend or a day trip.

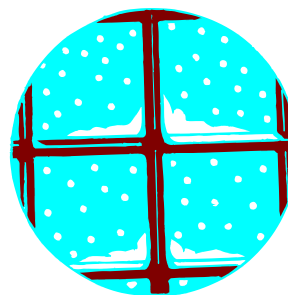


- Be realistic. There are going to be difficult moments. That’s okay!
- Make lists of what you decide you are going to do. Try to stay focused.

## Tips for Family and Friends

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■ Bereaved persons often do not have the energy to reach out; why not call them and offer specific types of help (see back panel for helpful hints). Often if we wait for their phone call, it may not come.



- Don’t feel uncomfortable to say the name of the deceased. It is important to mention the person by name.
- Allow and welcome tears. One of the most important gifts you can give is to allow the bereaved to cry when needed. Their

tears will not last forever and are important to share.

- Ask the bereaved to share stories of the deceased. Story telling is important to all of us. There may be no better gift to give during special holidays.
- Leave the “you ought to” out of conversations. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.
- Ask the bereaved what they truly need or want.
- Remember that grieving people may have difficulty concentrating. If they forget, forgive them.
- Welcome new ideas or traditions. If the bereaved person has a need to do something new or different this year, that can be good. Help them try new ideas.
- Understand if the grieving person says no to a special occasion.
- Be sure to ask if the person wants to be alone or not and invite them along if they do not want to be alone.
- Stagger visits to the bereaved’s home. Too many people all at once can be overwhelming, even when he or she loves you. Staggering visits will also leave less “empty” time at home. The silence, which exists when everyone leaves at once, can be deafening.