



Holiday time can be enjoyable and social but also difficult, especially for those who are grieving. We are now in the middle of the Holiday Season. I walked through a local square last night and saw a huge star lit up and the song playing was "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." In contrast to this song several people have said to me in the last week "I just want the Holidays to be over." Many who are grieving a loss find the Holidays challenging. They bring up so many feelings of loneliness, yearning and sadness. We have gathered here suggestions for coping from those who have had losses –We hope they provide inspiration for you. On behalf of all of us at NVNA and Hospice I send you peace and hope for gentle self-care during this Holiday Season and beyond. We are here for you.



### *Suggestions for Coping with Grief in the Holiday Season*

- *Plan ahead. Write down what events you agreed to go to. It can help you know what you have committed to. At the same time, allow yourself flexibility...you may find you are too exhausted to attend the office party after all.*
- *Ask for help... ask a friend or relative to help put up decorations, wrap presents, write cards. Serving you helps them too.*
- *Help others in need. Contributing to someone else gets your attention away from yourself and actually makes you feel better too.*



- *When you go out, leave a light on and a radio playing. Walking into a house with warm light and low music can be comforting when returning home on a dark winter evening.*
- *Allow feelings to come and go... express your feelings. Create support for yourself. Gather with people you feel you can talk to or join a support group.*
- *Take care of yourself physically Cry, Breathe, drink water, exercise, and say no to sweets and alcohol.*
- *Allow your loved one's spirit to be present in concrete ways.*
  - *Remember your loved one with a special ornament*
  - *Place a bouquet of flowers on your holiday table in memory of them.*
  - *Cook their favorite dish. Make a toast in their honor.*
- *Avoid the holidays...if joining in festivities is too much to bear, you can choose not to observe.*
- *Begin a gratitude Journal: Three things each day you are grateful for. These do not need to be big things. Simple things are important in our grief to begin to find hope, meaning and gradually re-create our lives.*

Karen Gore, LICSW  
Bereavement Coordinator & Counselor  
kgore@nvna.org