

Self-Compassion and Self-Care

During the Holiday Season

Given the external reminders of the holidays and the internal conundrum about celebrating while grieving, the holidays can be a tender time. We typically place a number of expectations upon ourselves, which can result in judgments. Thus, the holidays are a good time to practice self-compassion.

Often we speak to ourselves more harshly than we would a close friend. In the wake of your loss, choose to be kind to yourself. For example, set realistic expectations of yourself at the holidays. Allow yourself to decline an invitation when needed. If that inner critic sounds off, silence it and understand your behavior through a compassionate lens. Be respectful of the limitations that grief demands.

Buoy yourself up with the following self-care practices. Continue customs that already nurture you and consider the following activities to build your tool-kit of self-care.

Listen to your favorite music

Enjoy a long, warm bubble bath

Go for a walk

Share a hug with a loved one

Exercise (of your choice)

Spiritual Prayer

Attend a caring support group

Practice diaphragmatic breathing

Do "stretching" exercises

Reflect on your positive qualities: "I am . . ."

Watch the sunset or sunrise

Imagine a relaxing scene and focus on it

Receive a massage

Reflect on what you appreciate

Journal your thoughts and feelings

Attend a favorite athletic event

Forgive yourself, forgive another

Read a special book or magazine

Enjoy the beauty of nature

Play a musical instrument

Meditate

Work with plants (garden)

Learn a new skill

Jump in the ocean

Smell flowers

View art

Play a game

Sing a song

Dance

Blow bubbles

Draw

Nap

