

Ways to cope with the first Christmas after someone has died



Christmas is typically a joyous occasion but, following the loss of a loved one, it can be painful to think about a Christmas without them, especially if it is the first one since their passing.

Although it may be difficult, you need to remember to take care of yourself. Here are some tips and coping strategies to help you get through the holiday season without a loved one.

Commemorate Them

You may want to find a way to pay tribute to your loved one, to remember them and include them in your day.

This could be through a poem or inspirational reading, or you could have a photo of them on display. Alternatively, you may want to visit their grave or a place they loved.

Honour Traditions

You might feel the best way to commemorate them is to honour past Christmas traditions by continuing on with them and celebrating as you normally would and surrounding yourself with the people you would usually see at this time of year.

Do Things Differently

However, if you feel it would be too hard to continue past traditions without your loved one, you could come up with a new tradition instead.

You might find the traditional Christmas celebrations to be altogether too much, or to be a painful reminder of the past. If that is the case, try doing something completely different.

If you tend to go to the same place for Christmas every year or usually spend Christmas at home, try going somewhere new.

Do Something For You

Make sure that you do something that is just for you, something you can look forward to. That could be taking a stroll, reading a book, watching your favourite film, eating your favourite treat, or going to your favourite place.

Try to have some fun. Your loved one would not want you to be miserable, so you should not feel guilty about enjoying yourself.

Allow Yourself to Grieve

Of course, having a good time does not mean that the sadness disappears. It is important to acknowledge that this will be a hard time, and you should embrace your feelings and allow yourself to grieve, but do not let it consume you.

Talk To Someone

Whatever you do, it is important that you do not isolate yourself from everyone. If it all gets a little too overwhelming, do not be afraid to reach out to someone for a chat, or to ask for support if you need it.

It might help you to talk about how you feel and any concerns you have, or to talk about your loved one, and to share your memories with them.

You will no doubt be in your friends and family's thoughts, even if they do not reach out to you themselves. If that is the case, they may just feel you need space, not know what to say, or be afraid of upsetting you.

If you are struggling, but feel you cannot reach out to anyone you know, call the Cruse National Helpline on 0808 808 1677, or use the CruseChat service on their website and chat to a trained grief counsellor.