

# Holidays Without Your Loved Ones

by Alan Gamble, DCSW, LCSW, Bereavement Network of Hawaii

**L**ike birthdays and anniversaries, holidays are filled with loving memories of special times celebrated with family and friends.

But when you have experienced the loss of a loved one and are grieving, it is sometimes difficult to authentically participate with others during the holidays.

Your world has changed, often in profound and very personal ways. Emotions are often complex and hard to share with others.

So how can you manage these feelings? Here are some ideas and resources that may be helpful to you this holiday season.

♥ **Give yourself permission and space** to feel what you are feeling now. Realize you won't always feel like you do now. Reduce the expectations that you place on yourself. We each grieve in our own unique way with our own timing. These feelings can be unpredictable — much like riding a roller coaster.

♥ **Create a new holiday custom in their memory.** Consider setting a place at the holiday table for your loved one who died, lighting a candle in their honor, giving to a charity they liked or sharing loving stories which include them. Remember, love and grief go hand in hand.

♥ **Try sharing with others what you need.** Others want to help but don't necessarily know what you need or what might be helpful for you or your family.



♥ **Don't feel obligated to participate socially with others.** It's okay. When invited, you can say, "Let me check my calendar and get back to you." Or say, "I can stop by for a couple of minutes." That way, you can stay or leave the event depending on how you feel once you are there.

♥ **Seek the kind of people who will provide you opportunities for healing.** There are others who can be a source of compassion, love and healing during your journey. ■

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BEREAVEMENT NETWORK OF HAWAII  
Facilitated by KOKUA MAU (nonprofit)  
**808-585-9977 | [kokuamau.org](http://kokuamau.org)**  
**[kokuamau.org/grief-and-bereavement](http://kokuamau.org/grief-and-bereavement)**

*For more information and support:*

*Hospice programs in Hawai'i have grief support, including grief groups and holiday-related remembrance events that are open to you and your family. For a listing of hospice and other programs, go to [kokuamau.org/grief-and-bereavement](http://kokuamau.org/grief-and-bereavement) and click on the Bereavement Network of Hawaii (BNOH) link provided.*

*Register for "Let's Talk Story About Grieving During the Holidays" a free, live, Hawai'i-based, BNOH zoom presentation on Nov. 19 from 4 to 5:30pm.*

*To register go to: [mitsaokilegacyfoundation.org/holidays](http://mitsaokilegacyfoundation.org/holidays)*

*Resources:*

**[aarp.org/home-family/friends-family/info-2020/grief-loss-during-holidays.html](http://aarp.org/home-family/friends-family/info-2020/grief-loss-during-holidays.html)**

**[psychologytoday.com/us/blog/lifetime-connections/202211/working-through-grief-during-the-holidays](http://psychologytoday.com/us/blog/lifetime-connections/202211/working-through-grief-during-the-holidays)**

