

Change and the Holidays

For many people, the holidays are a reminder of how much life has changed in the last year. The birth of a child, the loss of a loved one, or a family member's move to another city are just some of the life events which may have an impact on holiday gatherings or traditions. Even positive changes may disrupt holiday expectations, resulting in feelings of sadness, grief, or disappointment.

If you are struggling with change this holiday season, these suggestions may help:

- ▶ **Acknowledge your feelings.** It's okay to be sad because a loved one can't come home for the holidays or to grieve someone who has passed away. Sharing these feelings, such as by saying "I'm missing your grandma a lot this year," may make it easier to cope.
- ▶ **Appreciate what you have.** Focus on what you can do this holiday season rather than what you can't. For instance, if you are unable to travel to see family this year, focus on creating a happy holiday with friends or your immediate family.
- ▶ **Go with the flow.** It may be disappointing to learn that a friend or family member has decided to cancel a holiday gathering or discontinue a special tradition. However, it is important to be supportive of their decision, particularly if it is due to a major life change.



- ▶ **Maintain your daily routine.** Changes to eating, sleeping, and exercise patterns may make it harder to manage your emotional and physical wellbeing. Staying on a regular schedule is particularly important if you have younger children.
- ▶ **Practice self-care.** If you are feeling overwhelmed, take a stress break by meditating, reading a book, or going for a walk. Avoid making more commitments than you can handle.
- ▶ **Plan for next year.** If a beloved tradition has come to an end, consider starting a new one. Talk to family or friends about what kind of gathering or other celebration they would like to have. Remember that holiday traditions work best when they are fun for everyone — including you!

Are you feeling stressed or sad about the upcoming holidays? LifeMatters can help. We're available 24/7, including on holidays.

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