

Loneliness and the Holidays

This holiday season may be unlike anything any of us have ever experienced before. Many holiday traditions that involve large gatherings, such as concerts or parades, may be cancelled, while others may be sharply curtailed due to crowd limits. In addition, it may be harder to travel or gather with friends this year. Some people may feel the safest choice is to spend the holidays alone.

If you are worried that the holidays may be disappointing, consider these suggestions:

- ▶ **Reach out.** Talk to family and friends about how you are feeling. You may find that many of them have similar worries. Share ideas for how to make the season special.
- ▶ **Expand available activities.** While many traditions may be temporarily on hold, some will still go forward as planned and could become a bigger part of your holiday experience. For instance, if taking a drive to look at decorations is a favorite activity, consider expanding outward to explore other neighborhoods or towns.
- ▶ **Flip the script.** Think about the positives of a low-key holiday season. What activities have always been sidelined for other obligations? Now is the opportunity to do that extra decorating, try new holiday baking or crafts, or plan that big movie marathon.
- ▶ **Be honest with children.** Explain that, for safety reasons, this is going to be a different kind of holiday. Ask for input on ways to make it a good experience. What foods, movies, or activities would make the day special for them?

- ▶ **Set boundaries.** Some family or friends may be unhappy if you decide to skip some events or avoid large gatherings. Respectfully let people know that while you wish things were different, you feel this is the most responsible choice.

If the disappointments of this holiday season have you down, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.



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