

Battling the Holiday Blues — Solari Hospice Care Offers Tips for Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season

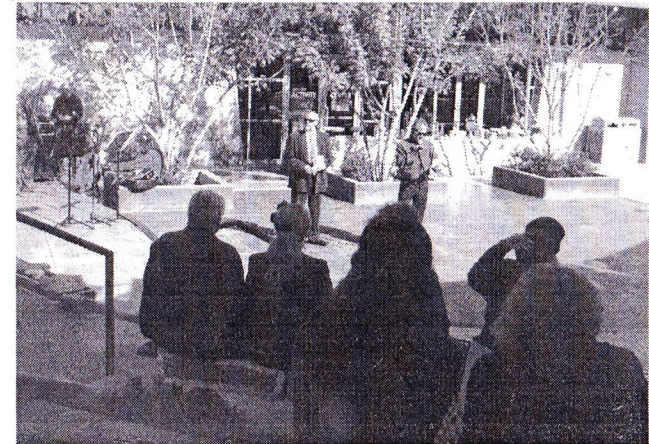
By Sarah Pellegrino

We may remember the Chanukah where Safta lit the tablecloth on fire, Uncle Ralph drank a little too much holiday cheer, or the sufganiyot was tastier than ever before. These memories often remind us of a time spent surrounded by our loved ones — parents, grandparents, spouses, children, dear friends — all those closest to our hearts. But, when these loved ones have passed away, certain traditions can bring back memories that are painful to recall and difficult to put aside. Remembering and grieving for lost loved ones during the holiday can be especially tough, but hospice experts offer a number of useful strategies for working through

grief to find as much joy as possible during this special season.

“We don’t tell people how or what to feel, because each person’s situation is unique,” says Candis Armour, R.N., executive director of Solari Hospice Care in Las Vegas. “However, we can offer words of comfort and guidance to help people work through the pain. Often, people find that it helps simply to release emotions and not keep them bottled up inside. Just sharing a story or quietly listening to someone else’s experience can give people a sense of connection, camaraderie or closure.”

One of the most essential ways to deal with a



As bereavement counselor Chris Kopoew looks on, Solari Hospice Care Founder and CEO Gary W. Polsky speaks to attendees at Solari’s 2011 Celebration of Life event, which offers ceremonial closure to the formal grieving process. Held Nov. 12 at the Springs Preserve, the Celebration of Life honored Solari patients who passed away from Nov. 2009 through Dec. 2010.

Yahrzeits

Congregation Ner Tamid Yahrzeits

Irwin Appel	Keith Levine
Jenny Aronoff	Vivian Klein Markowitz
Joseph Barasch	Joann Mauriello
Ben Baruch	Rose Miller
Irving Chasnick	Dora Morningstar
Eli Cohen	Lawrence “Larry” Mushkin
Benjamin Dvorak	Louis Myers
Jerry Ebner	Irving Naftolin
Ruth Falk	Adele Nathan
Abe Fox	Betty Nathan
Ann Frank	Walter Nathan
Lewis Gorlick	Sophie Palbaum
Louis Gottlieb	Dorothy Pearlman
Bernadine Greenwald	Leo Perelman
Leonard Grey	Ann Reichlin
Aaron Harris	Herman Roberg
Sandy Hayman	Philip Leo Schwartz
Bernice Kaplan Barr	Miriam Shiroff
Roz Katz	Herb Spiwak

Temple Beth Sholom Yahrzeits

Claire Arnold	Evelyn Dansker Masciale
Ellie Basso	Ruth Mendelson
Carl Berg	Goldie Merkin
Susan Berman	Miriam Metzenbaum
Mildred Berner	Mary Milstein
Max Bluestein	John Moniz
Herman Bock	Daisy Newmark
Jennie Brown	Marilyn Oscher
Lillian Brustowsky	Sonia Passen
Harry Caplan	Rita Pearlmutter
Yeheksial Chozahinoff	Joseph Porath
Ida Libby Cieser	Sheldon Raphael
Morry Deitch	Samuel Reisman
Martin Fortel	Harry Rosenberg
Helen Frankoff	Joe Rosenberg
Gertrude Fruchter	George Rosencrantz
Raye Gilberg	Jacob Rosenthal
Harold Gilman	Ann Rosenzweig
Marvin Ginsberg	Herman Rubin

loss is to think about it. Normally, your first thought would be to push the memories to the back of your mind where you can save them for a rainy day and not the cheerful holidays. However, suppressing your thoughts or emotions will only make you feel worse in the long run. Grieving is a natural process. Give yourself permission to be sad. It’s okay to skip a holiday party if you’re having a tough day, and it’s equally okay to go even if you’re not in a festive mood.

Secondly, talk about it. Surrounding yourself with people who care isn’t hard during the holidays as family and friends gather together. However, expressing your feelings of grief apart from the people and places most connected to your lost loved one — such as during a get-together with a compassionate friend at your favorite coffee-house — can work wonders at moving you past

loved one — such as during a get-together with a compassionate friend at your favorite coffee-house — can work wonders at moving you past your pain.

Even though Chanukah isn't a particularly religious time of year, getting in touch with religious or spiritual practices can be greatly beneficial. Some people derive great strength from being part of that community. Talk to a rabbi, attend services at the synagogue, or join a religious study group. Sharing your experiences with other people of your same faith can help you feel less alone.

Another important, yet neglected, way to cope with grief is to take care of yourself. By eating healthy foods, exercising regularly, and taking time out to rejuvenate your body and spirit, you will be better prepared to face your grief. It's essential to get adequate sleep, and perhaps avoid alcohol (a depressant), to keep your energy up and your attitude positive.

For many people, acknowledging the loss every year with one small action helps to ease the pain. For example, you might light a candle in your loved one's memory, or donate to a charity in his or her name.

Finally, always remember that it's okay to seek professional help. Bereavement professionals, including the team at Solari Hospice Care in Las Vegas, understand how difficult it is to cope with loss, particularly during this special season. To help individuals find healthy ways to heal and cope, Solari offers two free ongoing weekly Grief Support Groups on Tuesdays, from 5 to 7 p.m., and on Fridays, from 10 a.m. to noon. Both groups meet in the Solari Hospice Care Administrative Building, located at 5550 S. Jones Blvd.

To register for one of the Grief Support Groups or for more information, please call Chris Kopoew, bereavement counselor, Solari Hospice Care, at 702-870-0000.