

TO YOUR HEALTH

Carleton-Willard Village Out –Patient Clinic—100 Old Billerica Rd. , Bedford, Ma. 01730



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*Happy
Holidays*

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When Blue Snowflakes Start Falling



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How do we begin to cope with the holidays after losing a family member or loved one? The many varying emotions of grief mixed with the complexities of family dynamics and the pressures of the holidays can leave us unsure of whether to carry on with our normal traditions or to change them and create new ones. One place to start to think about what we will need is to come to the realization that, at least at the beginning, the holiday will not be the same without that person.

Consider that grief is the natural reaction to loss and people's experiences of grief can vary widely. In the same way that each person's relationship to the deceased is different, their process of grieving will be equally unique and individual. Therefore, it may be necessary for families to decide what to do together by discussing whether or not to change a tradition. Some may want to retreat from the celebrations altogether, while others may want to create new traditions incorporating some of the things that were meaningful to the person they loved.

How ever our loved ones are remembered or celebrated around holiday time, it's important to know that we cannot force ourselves to feel a certain way. Similarly, we can't be pressured by other's thoughts about how we "should" be coping. Grief takes its own time and it cannot be rushed. Keep in mind that tuning into our own needs during times of grief can help us move through the feelings of loss and sadness. Everyone's process is different, so comparing ourselves to others can be counterproductive. Above all, we need to be patient with ourselves and each other as we experience the loss of our loved ones, particularly around holiday time.

Keeping the loved one's memory alive during the holidays could be done in many ways. The website, www.whatsyourgrief.com has some ideas and suggestions.

- Preparing their favorite foods or listening to the music they loved can be of comfort.
- When friends or family are gathered, we can light a candle and allow for space so each person can share a memory of that person if they choose.
- Before a meal, a poem could be read or a blessing given.
- It may be appropriate to ask for a moment of silence to invoke the memory of the loved one, allowing each person present to have space for silent reflection in their own unique way.
- Donations could be made to a charity that the person was passionate about or dedicating a memorial gift in their name can be meaningful.
- Holiday guests could create a Memory Tablecloth together. Have a special tablecloth and fabric markers or Sharpies available for people to write down a favorite memory of the person or draw a picture. Along these lines, ornaments, stockings or garlands could be decorated to honor the person's memory.

One way to make it through the holidays after losing a loved one is to have a plan. With the knowledge that the normal traditions may be hard, decide which ones can be omitted. For example, if you usually send cards or write a long holiday letter to update friends and family far away, you may want to skip that this year

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It may require looking inside to assess what your needs are and what will be too difficult. For example, it could be helpful to have an exit strategy if gatherings get too hard. Thinking of ways to gracefully bow out of a celebration ahead of time can be a lifesaver. For more details about developing a plan for the holidays, refer to www.grief.com.

The holidays are inherently a nostalgic time for many of us. Approaching them with awareness of our feelings of grief can help us get through memories of both loving and sad times from the past. Getting plenty of sleep, exercising every day, creating a plan for family gatherings and reaching out for help can be ways to move through grief after loss at this time of year.

- Wishing you peace in the New Year!



New Vaccine Coming in 2018

Shingrix is a new vaccine recently approved to protect older adults from shingles. Studies have shown that this vaccine provides significantly better protection than the current Zostavax vaccine. It is recommended for adults age 50 and older. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices also recommends that anyone previously vaccinated with Zostavax be revaccinated with the new vaccine. These recommendations are expected to be approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the coming year.

What will I do this *holiday* season?

weep for you. *Miss you.*

Be *kind* to a stranger because of our love.

Invoke your *name* so others will honor you.

Stand in awe at the *beauty* of all you are.

Meditate on your life and death.

Carry you in my heart wherever I journey.

Show mercy to *children* and animals.

Ask for your *forgiveness*. And presence.

unfold your love into the world.
Remember. Your. Beauty.

Dr. Joanne Cacciatore

New Policy



Each year, Carleton-Willard Village offers flu clinics and encourages everyone to get vaccinated against influenza. This year all personnel who receive a flu shot will be wearing a sticker on their name tag. Staff who have not received a flu shot will be required to wear a surgical mask while directly interfacing with Residents. This new policy was instituted in an effort to provide the best protection for all against influenza.

May your Holiday Season be filled with Peace, Love and Joy!
Happy Holidays from the Clinic Staff: Susan, Debbie, Andrea, Judi and Michelle