

Coping with Grief during the Holidays

The holidays can bring up many feelings and emotions both pleasant and emotional. We encourage you to take gentle and compassionate care of yourselves over the coming weeks. Give yourself the permission to honour your needs. You are worthy and valuable. You deserve to be cared for.

Honouring your child or children:

Connection can be especially important during the holidays. Finding meaningful ways to feel close to your child. This could be through visiting a place that helps make you feel connected to them; through song or art; sharing stories; looking at photos; honouring old traditions or creating new ones.

If there are siblings, finding ways to include them in honouring their sibling. This can include meeting children where they are at, including tougher moments of grief and in moments of joy. Parents and family members can take time to listen and validate anything they may be feeling.

It can be helpful to think of ways to care for yourself ahead of the holidays. Perhaps make a list of ways you can tend to your needs

- Engaging in a hobby
- Reading a book
- Scheduling moments of “you” time, where you do not have any formal commitments
- Spending time in nature (bundle up!)
- Giving back to your community
- Reach out to a friend or family who you feel heard and seen by
- Pacing yourself with social events; and time outside of the home. Give yourself permission to leave early or allow yourself to say No if you are feeling drained.

Grounding Exercises:

Sensory Grounding: Grounding using 5 senses

Box Breathing – Relaxation technique, video from Sunnybrooke Health

[Box breathing relaxation technique: how to calm feelings of stress or anxiety \(sunnybrook.ca\)](https://www.sunnybrook.ca/box-breathing-relaxation-technique-how-to-calm-feelings-of-stress-or-anxiety)

Additional Support:

Please reach out to your Roger Neilson House Social Worker to book support during business hours. For support for siblings, please contact Recreation therapy.

If ever you are having challenging thoughts, or feeling overwhelmed, please access the following supports in the Ottawa and Gatineau area:

Kids Help Phone [1-800-668-6868](https://www.kidshelpline.ca) [Get support with these mental health resources - Kids Help Phone](https://www.kidshelpline.ca)

Youth & parents can contact the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) Crisis Line: [613-260-2360](https://www.ysb.ca)

[24/7 Crisis Line & Online Crisis Chat - Youth Services Jeunesse \(ysb.ca\)](https://www.ysb.ca)

Resources and Crisis lines in the Ottawa & Gatineau area: [Resources and crisis lines | CMHA Ottawa](https://www.cmha.ca)

[Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region](https://www.dcottawa.on.ca) | [613-238-3311 \(dcottawa.on.ca\)](https://www.dcottawa.on.ca) for 24/7 immediate crisis support
[Accueil > Tel-Aide Outaouais \(telaideoutaouais.ca\)](https://www.telaideoutaouais.ca) offers French-language mental health telephone support.
 Ottawa residents can call [613-741-6433](https://www.telaideoutaouais.ca) and Gatineau residents can contact [819-775-3223](https://www.telaideoutaouais.ca).

