

Healthcare Spotlight

PARENT CARE

Making the Best of the Holidays

by **NANCY WEBRE** of Evergreen In-Home Care Services



The holiday season is upon us. For most of us, the holiday season is a time of celebration and making memories with family and friends. However, for some, particularly seniors, the holidays can be a difficult time due to loss of health or independence. For many elderly, holidays are not a time of celebration and joy but may serve as a reminder of how lonely they may be, or of the absence of friends, spouses or siblings who have died. In fact, the holidays can actually bring on feelings of isolation and loneliness.

What can families do to help reduce loneliness and feelings of depression around the holidays? We are all busy

and stressed ourselves during the holiday season. However, by simplifying and focusing on what really matters, you can be supportive and make a difference during this time. Following are several tips that may help to enhance your loved one's holidays:

- Listen, understand and empathize. Put yourself in their place. Talk about memories of loved ones and acknowledge losses. Listen to them express feelings. Be aware of signs of depression, is your loved one withdrawing or not engaging in activities?
- Set aside differences. Grievances should be set aside until another time. Try to accept family members even if they do

- not live up to all of your expectations. Plan ahead. Make plans early but be flexible if changes in those plans need to be made.
- Include older relatives in holiday festivities in the community, church or other social events. Simplify traditions to help reduce stress. Be conscious of a person's physical and mental limitations and accommodate accordingly. For example, keep parties to small numbers as large crowds can often be overwhelming to a person with dementia and memory issues. Remind your loved one of how important they are as a part of your celebrations that involve the family. Arrange and engage in regular phone contact, particularly if parents are distant. This will help them to feel they are thought about and loved.

Give the gift of time. Your time is the most valuable gift you can give to your elder loved ones during the holidays. Plan one-on-one time. Involve them in simple activities such as listening to holiday music, cooking their home with goods or decorating their home with cherished ornaments. Do what you can without stressing yourself. The holidays can be a very stressful time for everyone, especially if we are worried about family obligations and responsibilities. However, the best thing adult children can do for their elderly parents or loved ones is to reach out and make sure that person is acknowledged and provided with a sense of self worth. For further information regarding Evergreen's services, contact Evergreen In-Home Care Services at 541-389-0006.



EVERGREEN
In-Home Care Services

Care for loved ones.
Comfort for all.

Parent Care: Making the Best of the Holidays

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What can families do to help reduce loneliness and feelings of depression around the holidays? We are all busy and stressed ourselves during the holiday season. However, by simplifying and focusing on what really matters, you can be supportive and make a difference during this time. Following are several tips that may help to enhance your loved one's holidays:

- Listen, understand, and empathize. Put yourself in their place. Talk about memories of loved ones and acknowledge losses. Listen to them reminisce. It's ok to take time to cry and express feelings. Be aware of signs of depression, is your loved one withdrawing or not engaging in activities?
- Set aside differences. Grievances should be set aside until another time. Try to accept family members even if they do not live up to all of your expectations.
- Plan ahead. Make plans early but be flexible if changes in those plans need to be made.
- Include older relatives in holiday festivities in the community, church or other social events. Simplify traditions to help reduce stress. Be conscious of a person's physical and mental limitations and accommodate accordingly. For example, keep parties to small numbers as large crowds can often be overwhelming to a person with dementia and memory issues. Remind your loved one of how important they are as a part of your celebrations that involve the family.
- Arrange and engage in regular phone contact, particularly if parents are distant. This will help them to feel they are thought about and loved.
- Give the gift of time. Your time is the most valuable gift you can give to your elder loved ones during the holidays. Plan one-on-one time. Involve them in simple activities such as listening to holiday music, cooking traditional baked goods or decorating their home with cherished ornaments. Do what you can without stressing yourself.

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