The holiday season is here, and with it comes a focus on family, traditions, social events, and cheer—all of which can cause difficult emotions to surface. Whether this is the first, second, or tenth holiday after your loved one's death, the emotions that may arise in the days ahead can blindside you.

And just like road signs, which show you what's ahead on unfamiliar roads with rough patches and curves, Surviving the Holidays guides you through this holiday season. You'll find support and direction to navigate the holidays in a healthy way.

Today you will watch a video, be part of a discussion group, and start using your Survival Guide, which has encouragement and helpful tips for the days ahead. These tools will help you not only to survive the coming holidays, but also to face them with a measure of peace and assurance.

In His love,
Sam Hodges
Griefshare president
griefshare.org
Grief is a journey.

Receive continued support along the way.

As you travel the path of grief, it’s important to have continued support and guidance. People have said that attending GriefShare was the best decision they made for their grief:

“Gave me so many positive coping strategies.”

– SANDRA

“A tremendous help for my pain.”

– ROMONA

“GriefShare taught me how to grieve.”

– CARL

NEW GROUPS ARE FORMING SOON—BOTH IN PERSON AND ONLINE!

GRIEFSHARE.ORG/FINDAGROUP

Find your group today!
Chapter 2   Having a Plan

Survivor Stories
The Strength to Survive

The importance of having a plan
Laying the foundation for your plans
Practical ideas to help you plan
Help your children survive the holidays
When grief calls for something new

6 Signs of Healing – Adjusting:
Blending family traditions

6 Signs of Healing – Continuing:
Memories of your loved one

Survival Tips
Be careful not to overburden yourself

Chapter 3   Handling Social Events

Choosing to spend time alone or with others
6 Signs of Healing – Accepting:
A problem with isolating

Who should you spend time with this holiday?
Tuning in to your “social bandwidth”
How do you respond to invitations?
Perhaps you are feeling a bit uncertain or apprehensive about what to expect today. These feelings are normal! By the time this seminar ends, we believe you'll be glad you came.

Surviving the Holidays has three important parts. All three can prepare you to face the holiday season and help you find comfort and relief.

- **Video**
  - You'll watch a video with helpful insights from counselors, pastors, and people who've faced personal loss, discussing:
    - How to prepare for hard-hitting emotions
    - What to do about yearly traditions
    - Handling holiday social events
    - Uncomfortable, awkward interactions
    - Where to find comfort, strength, and hope
  - A video outline for taking notes is on pp. 2–3.

- **Discussion**
  - You'll have the chance to talk with others about what you learned from the video and ask questions. You don't have to share during the discussion, but you can benefit from listening.

- **Personal reflections**
  - This book has practical strategies, encouragement, tips, and exercises. Take it home and commit to reading one or two pages daily. You are welcome to skip around the book.
  - Find bonus articles and video clips at griefshare.org/freeaccount.
Video cohosts David and Nancy Guthrie faced the deaths of two children. They minister to others in grief through Respite Retreats, speaking, and writing. Their books include *When Your Family's Lost a Loved One*, *Holding On to Hope*, and *Hearing Jesus Speak into Your Sorrow*.

The Guthries also cohost the 13-week GriefShare program videos.

**Expert insights**

These are some of the featured experts in the Survival Guide and the video.

**Keith Battle** is senior pastor of Zion Church, Washington, DC. He is an NBA and NFL chapel speaker. He created the radio broadcasts "When Sports Meets Life" and "Weekly Wisdom." His parents died from cancer.

**Sabrina D. Black** is CEO and clinical director of Abundant Life Counseling Center. A licensed counselor and certified addiction and biblical counselor, who has faced multiple losses in her own life, she helps others overcome life's challenges, including grief.

**Dr. Tate Cockrell**, founder and president of The Center for Hope & Reconciliation counseling ministry, is Associate Professor of Counseling at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. His brother died.
Dr. Zoricelis Davila is a licensed professional counselor, author, and speaker. She helps churches and families achieve emotional, spiritual, and mental health. She experienced multiple losses, including her father, mother, and close friend.

Ron Deal is a licensed marriage and family therapist, speaker, author, and podcaster. He is director of FamilyLife Blended®, president of Smart Stepfamilies™. His son passed away unexpectedly at age 12 from MRSA.

Dr. Robert DeVries is professor emeritus of church education at Calvin Theological Seminary. His first wife died of cancer. Now remarried to Dr. Susan Zonnebelt-Smeenge, they have coauthored many books, including The Empty Chair: Handling Grief on Holidays and Special Occasions.

Mel Erickson is an author, speaker, and social worker. She cowrote Teen Talk: An 8-Week Curriculum for Grieving Teenagers and authored the Our Story memory book to help children process their grief. Mel's son died.

Dr. Tony Evans is founder and senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas; founder and president of The Urban Alternative; chaplain of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks; and author of over 100 publications. His wife died.

Dr. Brad Hambrick is the author of God's Attributes: Rest for Life's Struggles and Making Sense of Forgiveness. He is pastor of counseling at The Summit Church in North Carolina and is assistant professor of biblical counseling at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.
Dr. Albert Hsu is senior editor for IVP Books at InterVarsity Press. He is the author of *Grieving a Suicide: A Loved One’s Search for Comfort, Answers, and Hope*, which he wrote out of the experience of losing his father to suicide.

The late Susan Lutz was a counselor at the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation in Glenside, Pennsylvania, for over 15 years. She authored the booklet *Thankfulness: Even When It Hurts*.

Dr. Elias Moitinho is professor of counseling at Liberty University in Virginia. He has over 20 years of experience serving as a pastor, counselor, and professor. He has a YouTube channel called Motivation and Growth.

Dr. Paul Tautges, pastor and counselor at Cornerstone Community Church in Ohio, is author of *A Small Book for the Hurting Heart*, *Comfort Those Who Grieve*, and *God’s Mercy in Our Suffering*. He lost his parents and granddaughter, and his uncle was murdered.

H. Norman Wright is a grief therapist and certified trauma specialist. He is the author of over 70 books, including *Experiencing Grief* and *Recovering from Losses in Life*. He experienced the death of his wife and son.

Dr. Susan Zonnebelt-Smeenge, licensed clinical psychologist, lost her husband 18 years after he was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. Now remarried to Dr. Robert DeVries, they have coauthored many books, including *Getting to the Other Side of Grief: Overcoming the Loss of a Spouse*. 
Need help dealing with grief? At a 13-week GriefShare support group, you'll find relief, strength, and guidance as you navigate the journey of grief. At GriefShare, you don't have to have it all together. The people there understand the raw emotions, mental fog, and daily struggles. They won't try to rush you or judge you.

This group offers a safe place where you can express your emotions, or choose to sit quietly and process what you're learning. You'll find out:

- What's “normal” in your grief
- How to handle difficult emotions
- Where to find the strength to go on

The group experience:

Each week you'll watch a video with expert counsel and personal stories, spend time in a group discussion (you don't have to talk!), and take home a book for further help on issues you're facing.

Going to a GriefShare group may be one of the best decisions you'll make as you seek to find relief, stability, and peace of mind through the pain of grief.


“Through GriefShare, you will slowly but surely experience healing.”

Donna

About GriefShare