



PEACE for the HOLIDAYS

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The best of times, the worst of times might well describe the holiday experience of loved ones of people with dementia. With some reflection, planning and flexibility, the balance can be shifted from the worst to the best. Integrate the following suggestions as you plan your holiday events to create memories that bring laughter not tears and help you find joy in the moments.

P Prioritize Decide which family traditions are most important and which parts of those are truly meaningful. While the person with dementia may not be able to tolerate the entire ritual, often they can participate in well-chosen components.

E Empathize View events through the eyes of the person with dementia. Changes in routines and environments can be difficult and frightening. Think about how decorations and events might confuse or be misinterpreted by the person with dementia.

A Adjust Consider modifying or simplifying plans. For example, small changes such as changing the time of an event to coincide with the person's best time of day or limiting numbers of people in the environment at any one time might make the experience better for everyone. Watch for signs of stress or distress and help the person find a place and time to relax and recover.

C Capture Record the memories of the person with dementia by encouraging reminiscence and storytelling to preserve family history. Use props like pictures, foods and decorations to trigger forgotten memories. Take candid multi-generational photos or video-they can be more touching and much easier than posed portraits.

E Enjoy Make memories. Don't get so involved in the plans you forget the point of the activity or event. The experience might not be like it used to be, but you can still find the magical moments. Especially for the person who is grieving: Holidays are difficult when you're experiencing the loss or the losing of someone you care about. Be patient with yourself as you grieve and find support in comforting rituals and people. Do what's right for you as you look for new ways to find Peace in the Holidays.



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