



Home for the Holidays



A MINI ACTIVITY GUIDE FROM

JOE TORRE

SAFE AT HOME.



Introduction

Being home for the holidays can come with many feelings. While for some the holidays might bring warmth and joy, for others, it could bring sadness, grief or worry. This mini-activity guide is intended to support **everyone** in exploring and preparing their coping-skills for this holiday season.

Recipe for Communication

Communicating with family and friends that you only see a few times a year can range from exciting to stressful, and every emotion in between. Use the **Recipe for Communication** activity sheet to prepare for those difficult, and not so difficult interactions!



Holiday Packing List

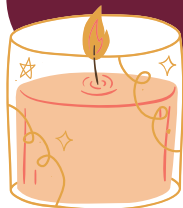
This year, remember to pack your coping-skills for your holiday season. Traveling for the holidays and staying in a new space, or a space you haven't seen in a while, can bring about many emotions. Be prepared with this **Holiday Packing List: Coping Edition**.



Responding to Grief

For many, this time of year can bring about memories and feelings that can be overwhelming at times. Grief is natural and is a feeling we all experience at some point or another. Embrace and accept grief with the **Responding to Grief** activity.

You can also check out our [Talking to Children and Teens about Grief](#) YouTube video for more support.





Recipe for Communication



1 cup of listening (Add a pinch of empathy)

Listening with empathy to family and friends allows them to feel validated. Supporting validation lets those we care about know that their feelings and experiences matter. Listening with the goal of understanding, instead of trying to prove our own point, allows us to come to resolutions faster and more calmly.



2 tablespoons of responsibility

Taking accountability for your feelings, and sharing them in a responsible way (i.e. "I feel _____ when _____") allows you to share your experience without putting blame on the person or people you are communicating with.



A sprinkle of directness

When communicating a need or want, be direct! Asking for help with something specific, or expressing your thoughts in a direct and clear way, leaves little room for confusion and miscommunication. Try this: "I could use some help cleaning dishes after dinner. Could you please help me for 10 minutes?"



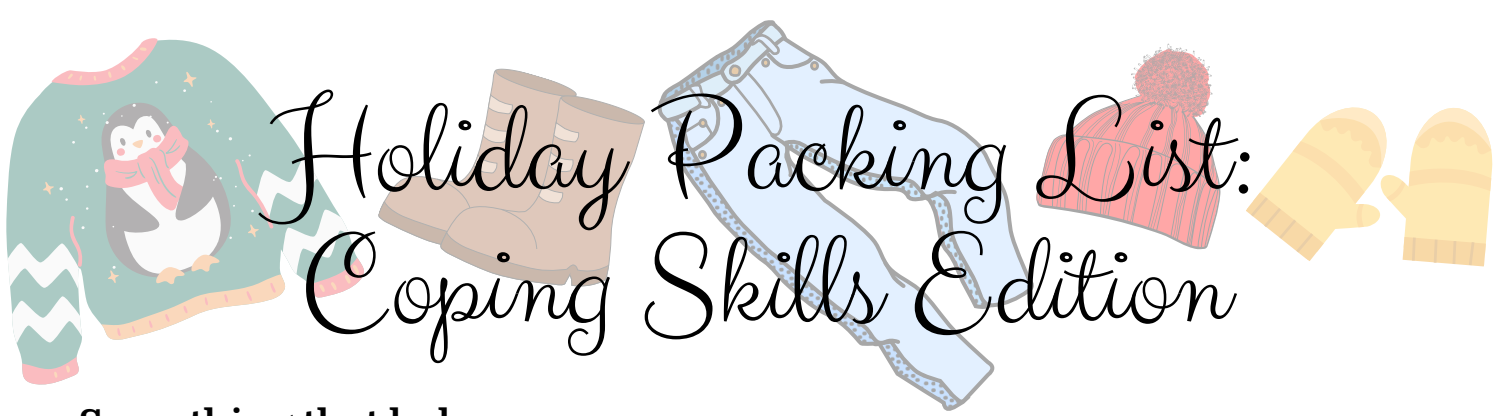
An ounce of planning

Need to talk about something particularly important? Sometimes, it's best to set aside time and plan to have a conversation when both parties have the time and space to give their full attention. Try setting aside time to have more important and possibly longer conversations. This will allow everyone to feel prepared and focused!



Let it rest

Sometimes, despite all our best efforts, conversations get heated. When this happens, it's best to take some time to cool down. Try saying this: "I'm going to take a break from this conversation, can we come back to it later when we are both calmer."



Holiday Packing List: Coping Skills Edition

Something that helps you chill out

Take time to consider what allows you to relax and decompress. Bring that skill with you as you prepare for your holiday season. "Packing" this could be a physical item, like a scented candle that brings calm. Or, it could be reminding yourself to practice deep breathing and meditation to relax and refresh. For more information on calming coping skills, visit our [YouTube channel](#).



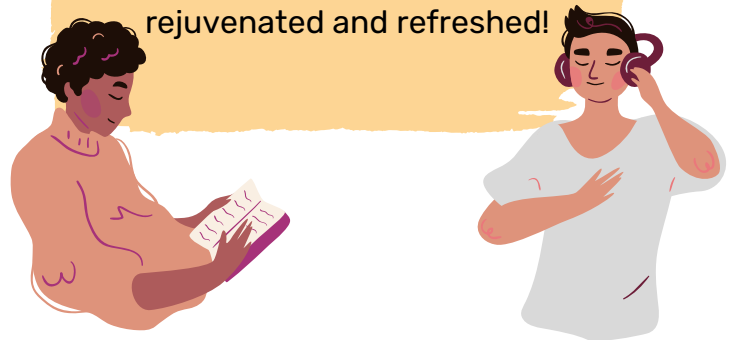
Something to keep you warm and fuzzy

Something warm and fuzzy could be your favorite sweater that makes you feel cozy and snuggled. It could also be something that keeps you emotionally warm, like a photo of ones you love, or a favorite recipe that you can share with family. This season, pack whatever it is that brings you joy!



Something to do alone

Being around others during the holiday season can be joyful and exhausting. Remembering to take "me" time is a way to minimize feeling burnt out in others' company. "Packing" an alone time activity, like a book, headphones for music, or even a favorite body wash for a hot shower can give you the space to feel rejuvenated and refreshed!



An emergency contact

Whether traveling, visiting family, or staying home, the holidays can bring up lots of different feelings. Making a list of contacts in case of crisis can help to have immediate support in times of need. In addition to a personal contact, other helpful numbers might include a mental health professional or help hotlines such as the national suicide prevention line (dial **988**).



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Responding to Grief

Materials

Clear jar or container
Tissue paper (various colors)
Paintbrush or sponge
Scissors
Liquid Glue (not a glue stick)



Color Guide



Angry



Happy



Excited/Hopeful



Nervous



Sad



A wish
you have
for the
future

Instructions

This activity can be done in a group, with family or friends, or individually.

Using scissors, cut out pieces of tissue paper into 3 inch squares.

Each person selects at least one of each color square.

If this is a group activity- using the color guide, each person shares a memory, or a time they felt the feeling associated with the color, specifically as it relates to grief (i.e. I felt angry when Nana passed away because I didn't get to say goodbye; or I feel sad when Dad can't spend holidays with us because he is so far away).

If this is an individual activity- write down or reflect on your memories, or feelings following the same instructions as above. You can choose to keep the paper in the jar, in another safe space, or dispose of it after the activity, whatever feels best for you!

After everyone has shared their feelings and memories, (or after reflecting on each color/feeling from the list) use the paint brush to brush glue all over the jar.

Each person then places their colored tissue paper around the glued jar until it is covered with colors.

The jar can be used as a decoration to honor the person, event, or experience that the group (or individual) is grieving. Consider lighting a candle and placing it in the jar.