

Mother's Day & Father's Day

GRIEF SUPPORT

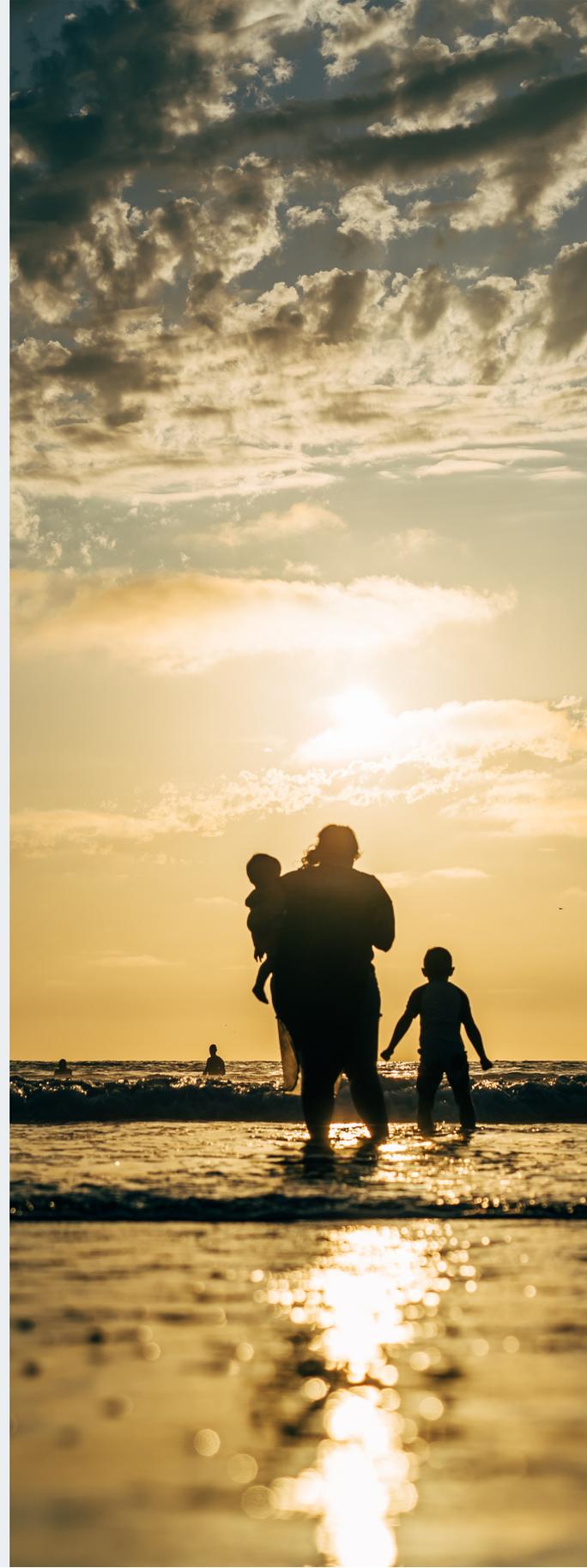
by Lisa Templeton-Farmer

Mother's Day and Father's Day are usually happy celebrations, but for others its often thought of as an invisible sad day of mourning, trigger feelings of sadness, loss and regret. while many people are rushing around trying to get that perfect gift or make sure they remember to send mom / dad a card. For many, this is a sad day. Either because they have a mother or father who has died or a child has died.

Some believe the days leading up to celebration may be harder than the day itself. Seeing the shopping ads, stores with greeting cards and candy offerings and the media coverage leading up to special days can be painful reminders of what is lost.

When you see other people having special events with their parents, it can be sad. You know the tradition will be different for you. You might regret not having spent more time with your parents.

Surrey Hospice Society (604) 584- 7006



Maybe you are jealous of friends having special celebrations. Do you miss your family traditions? Or do you just miss being able to share this special time with your own mom or dad?

Not all relationships were perfect and that can also complicate holidays.

Here are some ideas:

Have a quiet day on your own – perhaps do something you used to do with your mom, spend time looking at family photos or visit friends.

Do things differently – if the thought of a tradition is too painful, then change it up.

Remember the good times – enjoy your dad’s favorite meal or listen to his favorite music.

Create a memorial – plant flowers or a tree in a place that holds special memories.

Catch up with your siblings – share memories, or if you don’t feel ready to relive memories, visit your mom’s final resting place. Light a candle or have a memorial gathering in your home.

Buy a Mother’s Day or Father’s Day card – write a message and display it at home. Take it to the cemetery or perhaps mark the day with flowers in memory of your parent.



Release a biodegradable balloon – young people might wish to tie a card or special message to a balloon and release it into the sky. They could blow bubbles and imagine they carry a message.

Involve children in decisions – ask them how they feel about the day, and let them know that they can share any thoughts and feelings with you. They may be worried about upsetting you, so help them feel included. They may have some good ideas on what to do.

Tips for Mother's & Father's Day

Be patient with yourself – whether this is the first celebration without your parent or if your loss was long ago, this time can intensify grief. That's not something you need to "fix." It's a natural part of life.

Allow yourself to grieve – sometimes anticipation can be worse than the days themselves. Recognize that these times may be difficult.

Tell others what you need – do you want to continue traditions, begin new ones or not celebrate at all? Choose what you want to do and let those around you know how they might help you.

Reach out for support – if you think you need support, ask! Friends or family may feel awkward about offering help, so if you want company or support, let them know.

Don't feel guilty if you have moments of fun – honoring your parents includes knowing that they would want you to be able to feel joy.



Tips

- Find ways to honor and remember your mother/ father or both. Think of ways to honor your child.
- Light a candle
- Say a prayer
- Donate time or money in their name.
- Do something you loved to do together on that day.

It isn't as important how you remember, you honor them by the fact that you remember.