



# Mind and Matter

A publication of the University of Miami Faculty and Staff Assistance Program

## EMBRACING THE HOLIDAYS AFTER A LOSS

by Rosario Zavala, MSW, LCSW

The holidays evoke strong emotions for many of us. Memories of past gatherings with friends and family, or high expectations of ourselves and others, make this an especially difficult time for those who have lost a loved one. Consequently, this time of year may bring about a renewed sense of grief unlike that experienced in the routine of daily life. For this reason, it becomes important to initiate measures aimed at caring for ourselves during this special time of the year.

Below are suggestions which may make the holiday season more manageable:

- ▶ Be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Don't overextend yourself.
- ▶ Plan ahead and do what is right for you. Think about what family traditions you wish to continue and which ones you will toss aside. Identify new ones you would like to begin.
- ▶ Spend time with caring and supportive people. Talk about your grief with friends and relatives who will listen to you without passing judgment. Ignoring your feelings will not make them go away.
- ▶ Mention the deceased person by name in your holiday conversations. Share your stories and give permission for others to do the same.
- ▶ Embrace your memories. If they bring you laughter, laugh. If your memories evoke sadness, it's alright to cry.
- ▶ Go somewhere new for the holidays if you find that staying in the same place is too painful.
- ▶ It may be helpful to create a new holiday experience for you and yours.
- ▶ Renew your resources for living. Reflect on the meaning and purpose of your life.
- ▶ Take inventory. Try to make the best of this time and identify positives in your life that surround you.

May the memories of your loved one bring you joy this holiday season!



IF YOU FIND YOU ARE HAVING AN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT TIME  
MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS THIS SEASON, WE CAN HELP.  
SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH A FSAP  
CONSULTANT BY CALLING 305-284-6604.

# MENTAL HEALTH

## SUPER SIMPLE WAYS TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

EASY WAYS TO COUNTER THE NEGATIVE NELLIES IN YOUR HEAD



GET SOME CARDIO



FIND A  
DISTRACTOR



LISTEN TO  
UPBEAT MUSIC



TAKE A WALK



DO SOME YOGA



SCHEDULE A SMALL  
AMOUNT OF TIME  
FOR WORRYING

### REPEAT AFTER ME...

If you rapidly say a word or phrase over and over for a minute or two, the word will lose its meaning. Repeating words to reduce their power is a technique called cognitive defusion. You could even repeat it in a cartoon voice so it starts to sound plain silly.



### JOURNAL IT

Spending 20 minutes writing about something that's stressing you out can actually help you think about it less, say psychologists at the University of Texas.



Source: [happify.com](http://happify.com)

## Featured Seminar

### Relaxation Techniques for Coping with Stress

This lunchtime seminar is offered for those interested in learning how to manage day-to-day anxiety and stress by using calming, effective relaxation techniques. You will learn specific stress reduction methods you can use both at work and home to help you manage daily stressors.

December 8-10, 2015 | Register at [miami.edu/ulearn](http://miami.edu/ulearn).

“

Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.”

- Dr. Seuss

## Subscribe

*Mind and Matter* is a quarterly publication from the UM Faculty and Staff Assistance Program that provides helpful tips and articles regarding work-life balance, health and well-being.

If you would like to receive this newsletter directly in your inbox each quarter, as well as announcements about upcoming FSAP seminars, please send an email to [cbootle@miami.edu](mailto:cbootle@miami.edu).

## Did you know?

NEW

The FSAP delivers on-site seminar offerings to UM work groups. Seminars are tailored to meet the individual needs of each team and to feature specific subject matter. For a complete list, visit [miami.edu/fsap](http://miami.edu/fsap) and click "Seminars for Work-Groups."

Please contact the FSAP at 305-284-6604 if you have any questions, or wish to arrange a seminar offering.

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