Coping with loss on Valentine's Day

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Valentine's Day is a special day meant to show those you love most that you care about them, but for some this day could trigger feelings of grief because their loved one has passed away. One Baylor College of Medicine expert discusses how one might cope with these feelings.

"Valentine's Day is one of the days that might be stressful for some

people if they have lost someone special to them. There might be memories that reemerge that can make someone sad," said Dr. Jin Han, assistant professor in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Baylor. "There are some ways to cope with this to feel better though."

Han explained that how someone copes is an individual process, but the tendency of some people to isolate themselves when they feel sad is generally not helpful.

"Isolation can actually lead to feeling more depressed or it can lead to unnecessary thinking because you are alone with your own thoughts," Han said.

Making plans to be around family members or friends on a day like Valentine's Day when you might feel sad is a good way to cope, he said, and some people may even find it helpful to attend a group or individual therapy session.

"It can be really helpful to talk about your memories of your loved one and to share what you are feeling," he said. "Some people even go the cemetery to pay their respects. Doing so actually helps them feel better because they feel that it's a way to let their loved one know that they haven't forgotten about them."

Han cautioned that for other people this might actually be more stressful so it's important that the person cope in a different way if this is not helpful.

There are ways that family members and friends can step up and help the grieving person as well, he said.

"If you are surrounded by wonderful people who are very sensitive to

your [feelings](#), then they will actually be proactive and try to make sure they do something to help out," Han said.

Simply inviting someone to go to lunch is a great way to show that you care, he said. Even calling or video chatting with the person can show that you support them.

"Overall, the key is to avoid isolation. It is so easy to fall into that trap, especially when you are in that [emotional state](#), but it's not going to be helpful. You don't need to walk through the day alone," Han said.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine