



Champion

COMMUNITY Page

Coping without loved one at Christmas — holidays can still be full of joy, says local grief counsellor

By FANNIE SUNSHINE

The Champion

The holiday season is a time of giving, sharing, socializing and surrounding yourself with friends and loved ones.

But to someone who recently suffered the loss of a special person in their life, this time of year can be quite emotionally troublesome.

Maggie Waligora, a grief counsellor with north Halton-based the Art of Healthy Living, said she sees an increase this time of year of individuals seeking grief counselling.

"If the person's grief is fairly new, they tend to isolate themselves and think they shouldn't have any joy because they might be betraying a loved one," she said.

"The important thing to remember is that you're not betraying and must live in the present."

Everyone grieves differently

Ms Waligora, who's also the founder of Rose Cherry's Home, said those experiencing grief must try to express their feelings to family and friends.

"We all grieve differently. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve. Shock, disbelief, denial, isolation, crying, numbness, all give us time to face the tragedy," she said.

"During the holidays there is high expectations to feel joy. Because of those expectations the grieving person might feel a demand is being placed on them and might turn to substances (alcohol or drugs). It's important to be aware of that and to deal with grief without the aid of substances."

Friends and family should take on the supportive role in grief-stricken times but shouldn't force someone to talk about their pain.

"Some people just don't want to talk about it. You just have to accept the way the person grieves. Be prepared to be the one making the calls and checking in. Listen, encourage, take the person out for dinner. Allow them to cry if they want to cry," she said.

"The biggest disservice is not allowing the grieving person to talk about it."

Sometimes counselling needed

Although denial is a normal part of the grieving process, there does come a time when a person should seek professional treatment.

"Denial is common during the early stages of grief. But if you're still in denial two years down the road there's a problem. If they can't go on or don't have anyone to talk to, then I would recommend counselling."

The most important thing to do around the holidays is to realize having fun doesn't mean a loved one is forgotten.

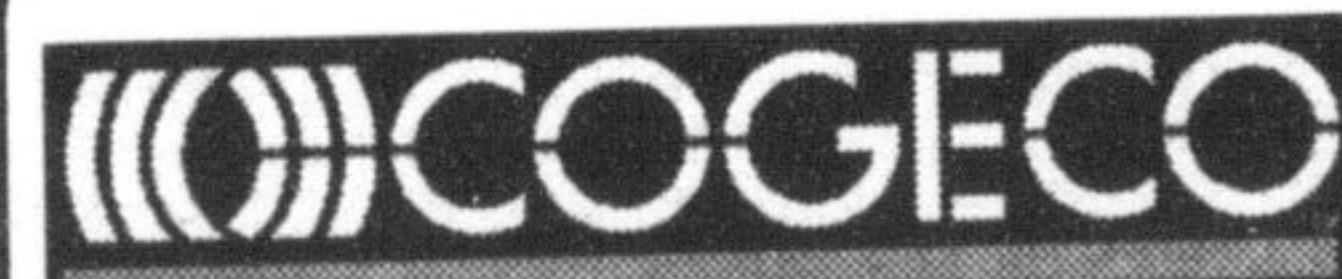
"You need to give yourself permission to have joy," Ms Waligora said.

"Know you have pain and do something meaningful or symbolic to remember that person."

To contact Ms Waligora, call (905) 702-7304.



COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — Tuesday, December 17th - Monday, December 23rd, 2002



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Tuesday, December 17th	Wednesday, December 18th	Thursday, December 19th	Friday, December 20th	Saturday, December 21st	Sunday, December 22nd	Monday, December 23rd
9am Plugged In! - Late Week Edition	9am Plugged In! - Christmas #1	9am Plugged In! - Christmas #1	9am Plugged In! - Christmas #1	9am, 10am, 11am Plugged In! - Christmas #1	9am Plugged In! - Christmas #1	9am Plugged In! - Christmas #2
10am Monday Replay	10:00am Tuesday Replay	10:00am Wednesday Replay	10am Thursday Replay	1:00pm Santa & The Kids	Noon A Small Town Christmas	10:00am Sunday Replay
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Christmas #1	5pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Christmas #1	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Christmas #1	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Christmas #1	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Christmas #1	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Christmas #2	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! - Christmas #2
5:30pm Seniors Showcase	5:30pm Kid Connection	5:30pm Osler Health Connection	8:00pm Milton Santa Claus Parade		5:30pm Faces - Curtis / Sladek 5	
6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo (Live)	6:00pm Swap Talk (Live)	6:30pm Main Street			6:30pm Senior Showcase	
8:00pm Halton Hills Awards & Council, Dec 9	7:00pm Santa & The Kids	8:00pm Rockwood Christmas Parade of Lights			7:00pm Osler Health Connection	
	8:00pm Auto Experts (Live)				8:00pm A Small Town	
	9:00pm Milton Santa Claus Parade					