

MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS



The holidays often present multiple demands: cooking meals, shopping, baking, cleaning & entertaining, to name just a few. All these factors cause Holiday Stress. The key to managing holiday related stress is recognition and response.

Here are some strategies that can help bring joy back to your holidays!

START BY ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR FEELINGS

Take a moment to observe your feelings. The holidays represent something different to each person. For many, the holidays can be a time to grieve due to loss, whether recent or in the distant past. Don't place unfair expectations of "what the holidays should be" and instead focus on what you are feeling. It's OK to take time to cry and express grief. Realize that for most people, the holidays are a time of mixed emotions - Times of joy and grief.

RECOGNIZE COMMON CAUSES OF HOLIDAY STRESS

According to a survey by the American Psychological Association (APA) 2/3 of Americans are stressed by over-scheduling the holidays. Another 2/3 are stressed by the financial burden of the holidays. 50% reporting feeling stressed by the pressure of giving and receiving gifts. Nearly 50% feel stressed about attending holiday get-togethers. It is likely what stresses you out about the holidays causes stress for your family, friends and co-workers.

STICK TO A BUDGET

Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. Decide in advance how much you will spend on the holidays. Gift your time or your talents instead of your money. Look for volunteering opportunities in your area. Make homemade gifts or baked goods. Consider sharing experiences or fun events with others instead of gift giving.

MAKE THE HOLIDAYS YOUR OWN

If you find yourself alone, get active. Say no to large gatherings if you would rather meet only with immediate family or be alone. Many communities are maintaining outdoor decorations. Walk through an outdoor display in the evening. Drive around to view decorations. Listen to holiday music. Connect with friends & family on your terms when needed. **Ask yourself. Am I over-scheduling? What events can I skip this year to feel less rushed?**

Not sure how you will manage the holiday season? You are not alone. Talking to a therapist is a great way to seek guidance through the holiday season.

Prepaid Counseling is provided by your **Employee Assistance Plan**

To schedule private and confidential counseling sessions:

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1 800 342 5653



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