

# HOLIDAY STRESS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Are you looking forward to the holiday season or are you just dreading it? The holiday season can be a very stressful time of the year even though it may be the most joyous time. Let's take a look at a few tools that may be helpful in managing the holiday season for you. Please consider using and personalizing a few of these strategies for your own toolkit to cope through the holidays.

***Relax and find ways to recharge by practicing self-care.*** The holidays are not always about how much you do, but also about finding some down time for yourself with things you enjoy (singing, listening to music, reading, doing absolutely nothing).

***Learn to say “no” or set boundaries.*** You do not have to do everything on your checklist or see every family member/friend.

***Plan out your days*** and give yourself enough time in between activities to take breaks for yourself to recharge your energy.

***Stick to a schedule.*** Routines are important for you to maintain your overall health.

***Be flexible.*** Things are not always going to go according to plan, so make the necessary adjustments needed. Stay connected.

***Reconnect with old friends/family*** or find ways to create new meaningful relationships through virtual or in-person options.

***Find what sparks “joy”*** in you during the holidays.

***Commit to doing something each day that makes you happy***, not just what makes others happy.



**Spend time outdoors** if you can or stay near windows to boost your feel good serotonin levels.

**Stay active** and find ways to get moving.

**Get enough rest** (7-9 hours per night).

**Eat and drink in moderation.** Be vigilant about overindulging in all those sweet treats and try to stick to a balanced diet. Alcohol also can be a depressant and encourage unwanted behaviors, so limit your use or avoid drinking completely.

**Focus on gratitude.** Be thankful for big and small things in your life or give back to others.

**Have realistic expectations for yourself.** Try not to set the bar too high or too low for yourself and let go of perfectionism.

**Find ways to stay in the present moment.** We often lose sight of what is important, so focus on what is happening in the present moment and enjoy the moment because it will pass.

**Stick to a budget** because overspending comes at a price. You do not want to add additional stresses to your life. Sometimes the best gifts or activities are the sentimental ones.

**Acknowledge your feelings.** The holidays may raise unpleasant emotions for you. Be aware of how you feel and give yourself permission to take a moment to process them.

**Switch up your traditions.** It is okay not to want or to let go of past traditions. It does not always have to be the same way each year if it causes you too much stress.

**Try not to compare your holiday to others.** Try to make the most of your holiday and some may be better than others may, but they are not the same.