

December 2016



Staying Emotionally Healthy During the Holidays

Do the holidays STRESS you out? You're not alone. It's a hectic time of year for many people, maybe even most people. The holidays add a layer of activity and responsibility, both real and imagined that require additional time, money and emotional energy. If you find yourself overwhelmed with the busyness of the holiday season these steps may help make things more manageable.

- 1. Take care of yourself.** We should do this all the time but it's especially important during moments of extreme stress to get enough sleep, to eat right, and to participate in some physical activity every day. Self-care is not an "extra". Time invested in yourself each day will more than pay off in your general sense of well-being throughout the season.
- 2. Enjoy the little things this season.** It's easy to get caught up in the activity of decorating, shopping, baking and wrapping. But are you truly enjoying any of it? Stop. Breathe. Take a few minutes to enjoy the decorations or to really look at the lights. Savor one of the cookies. Inhale the warm smells coming from your oven. Wrapping a gift can be just another chore or it can be a way to quietly celebrate what the intended receiver means to you.
- 3. Everything in moderation.** Be mindful of your own tipping points when it comes to holiday indulgences. You already know your limits for alcohol and sweets. Listen to your own good sense and you'll avoid waking up with regret, a headache or an extra five pounds.
- 4. Do random acts of kindness.** Get into the season of giving. Let someone else have that parking space near the store. Compliment the hurried store clerk. Let the mom who is shopping with kids go ahead of you in line. Doing good will make you feel good — or at least to feel a little better.
- 5. Reach out.** Lonely? Being alone, far from family or without one during the holidays is a key source of stress for many people. Connect with friends and plan some activities that celebrate the season — even if it's just enjoying a peppermint stick in a cup of tea. Attend your house of worship and stay if there is a coffee hour. Get into the holiday spirit by volunteering at a soup kitchen or charity event. Being in a festive atmosphere with other people who are working together for a good cause is a great antidote for loneliness.

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