



# Navigating the Holidays

Holidays are joyful times of festive celebrations with family and friends. And yet for many, that image is far from reality.



Loss, loneliness, and nostalgia can make holidays difficult for many people who feel that present holidays cannot compete with glorified memories of past celebrations, or who mourn the loss of loved ones no longer in their lives. Divorce, death, and distance from loved ones are especially painful at this time. If you feel the holidays bringing you down, consider the following to help you through the season:

## Maintain Balance

While indulging in festive feasts and festivities is often part of the season, don't use the holidays as an excuse to let go of a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Maintain consistency with meals, bedtimes, and exercise routines. All these routines help in managing or reducing stress and depression for both children and adults.

## Quality over Quantity

Whether it's participating in holiday events, gift giving, or planning meals, keep it simple but meaningful rather than trying to do, buy, or make it all. For example, try giving unique gifts that can't be bought, such as writing your family history or offering to clean a loved one's house.

## Reach Out

Some individuals may face an unusual or difficult holiday season due to family turmoil, such as the loss or absence of a family member. To help cope with difficult times it helps to set up planned events with people you love, be they friends or family.

## Check-in

It's easy to forget to care for ourselves when we're busy caring for people and events around us. Every so often, especially when life seems chaotic, take a step back and check-in with yourself. Consider your physical health, mental health and emotional health—and make adjustments where necessary.

## How do I know if I need to seek professional help?

If you feel that you are dealing with more than you can handle on your own, contact your Employee Assistance Program or other professional counselor.

## Some signs to watch for:

- A sad or depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Lack of energy
- Changes in appetite and/or weight
- Withdrawal from others
- Increased sleeping
- Anxiety
- Lack of concentration or indecision

For more information, or to speak with an EAP professional:



Call:  
1-800-765-0770