



MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

Holiday stress and depression are usually the result of Relationships, Finances and/or Physical Demands. Here are a few suggestions of things to do to minimize stress and to help you enjoy the Holidays:



Suggestions to Minimize **Relationship** Conflicts:

1. **Acknowledge Your Feelings:** If you've lost a loved one or can't be with family, realize that it's normal to feel sadness or grief. Take the time to express your feeling to a friend, family member or in a journal.
2. **Be Realistic:** As families grow and change, realize that traditions often changes as well. Find new ways to celebrate if you can't be together. Share pictures, emails or skype!
3. **Set Differences Aside:** Try to accept family members and friends even if they don't live up to your expectations. Set aside differences until a more appropriate time for discussion. Be understanding if others get upset or stressed.

Suggestions to Limit **Finances** Concerns:

1. **Stick to Budget:** BEFORE your go shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend on gifts and other items. Don't try to buy happiness with gifts. Donate to charity in someone's name, give homemade gifts or start a family gift exchange.

Suggestions to Reduce **Physical Demands**:

1. **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, decorating, visiting friends and other activities. Plan menus and then make one big food shopping trip. Allow extra time for travel so that delays won't worsen your stress.
2. **Learn to say NO:** People will understand if you can't do certain projects or activities. If you say YES to what you really want to do, you'll avoid feeling resentful and overwhelmed.
3. **Take a Breather:** Take time for yourself. Spending 15 minutes alone without distractions may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find solitude by taking a walk at night to stargaze, listen to music, or just sit in the bathroom behind the closed door!!! Find something to do that clears your mind.
4. **Don't Abandon Healthy Habits:** Don't let the holidays become a food free-for-all! Some indulgence is OK but overindulgence can increase stress and guilt. Get plenty of sleep and make sure that you schedule time for physical activity and maintain your regular exercise program.