

Planning Ahead for the Holidays SERIES: Coping with Upcoming Stress



Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression. You may also feel stressed, sad or anxious because your holiday plans may look different during the COVID-19 pandemic. To minimize the stress that will accompany the holidays this year, here are some coping tips:

Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, it's normal to feel sadness and grief.

Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events online. You could also try to reach out with a text, a call or a video chat.

Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. Choose a few traditions to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. Even though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other activities. Shop online and use curbside pick-up. Connect with those you love with an online zoom bake-off!

Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Just say yes to those things that you absolutely can't live without this holiday season.

Don't abandon healthy habits. Overindulgence only adds to stress and guilt. Try a healthy snack before holiday meals, get plenty of sleep and include regular physical activity in your daily routine.

Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Ideas: take a walk and stargaze at night, listen to soothing music, or read a book.

Seek professional help if you need it. If you find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores, seek help from a mental health professional.

Take control of the holidays by taking steps to prevent the stress and depression that can overwhelm us all. With a little planning, you can find peace and joy even during COVID-19.

Are you still experiencing high levels of stress surrounding holiday planning this year? Don't hesitate to call for help. Counselors are available through EAP. Services are confidential and FREE! Call **800-801-4182**, or **402-354-8000** or email eap@bestcareeap.org to schedule an appointment.