



DECEMBER  
TIP SHEET

## TIPS TO PREVENT HOLIDAY STRESS & DEPRESSION

The holiday season often brings stress and depression and the COVID-19 pandemic may add additional anxiety. Below are tips to help.



**Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. You can't force yourself to be happy because it's the holidays.



**Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social communities. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time or doing something to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits.



**Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails, or meet virtually on a video call.



**Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion.



**Stick to a budget.** Before you do your gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.



**Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. Make sure to line up help for meal prep and cleanup.



**Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress. Have a healthy snack before holiday meals so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks. Get plenty of sleep. Include regular physical activity in your daily routine. Avoid excessive tobacco, alcohol and drug use.



**Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break by yourself. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Take a walk at night and stargaze. Listen to soothing music or read a book.



**Seek professional help if you need it.** If you have an Employee Member Assistance Program (EMAP) reach out to them for help. If you don't have access to an EMAP, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.