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Holiday Anxiety and Stress

The holidays offer plenty of reasons to be stressed out and anxious. Whether it's the gift wrapping, the pile of cookie exchange invites, the office parties. But for many, the biggest source of holiday stress is family and/or friends-- the family and/or friends get together, the obligations, and the burden of some of these holiday traditions. For those with a history of depression or anxiety, or have had depression or anxiety in the past, the holiday stress can be a trigger for more serious problems.

Ken Duckworth, MD, medical director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, says, "The holiday season can be a time when family relationships are strained and the solution is to be more understanding of each other's needs." He adds, "It's important to recognize that the holiday season can be a time when family relationships are strained and the solution is to be more understanding of each other's needs."

With holiday family reunions looming in your calendar, what are some ways that you can prepare yourself and cope better this season?

Here are some tips on beating holiday stress and anxiety:

Change your outlook. Draw up a list of reasons why you engage in these holiday traditions and just make a simple pro and con list. This will remind you that you do have a choice. Then, make healthy decisions about what to invest your time in.

The next step is to challenge some of your assumptions. If you enjoyed the holidays differently this year, what would happen? Try something new. Toss out stressful activities.

The key is to take a step back and look at things the way you see them. It's not about the things you do, it's about the things you think. It's not about the things you do, it's about the things you think.



8 c b Ñ h ' Y I d Y W h ' y o u r h o l i d a y a n x i e t y s t e m s f r o m a d e e p e r h i s t o r y o f f a m i l y c o n f l i c t , X c b Ñ h ' Y I d Y W h ' h \ U h ' m c i Ñ ' ` ' V Y ' U V ` Y ' h c : Y o u m a y b e b e t t e r o f f f o c u s i n g o n y o u r o w n s t a t e o f m i n d a n d c o n f r o n t i n g d i f f i c u l t i s s u e s d u r i n g a l e s s v o l a t i l e t i m e o f y e a r .

Don't h ' c j Y T o r e d u c e h o l i d a y s t r e s s , y o u h a v e t o p a c e y o u r s e l f . D o n ' t o v e r c o m m i t o r o v e r s p e n d , e a t o r d r i n k t o o m u c h . F i n d s o m e d o w n t i m e *j u s t f o r y o u* . A s k f o r h e l p & / o r d e l e g a t e , a s a b l e .

Leave politics at the door. The recent election is at the top of everyone's mind. Recognize that strong opinions exist among friends and family and can cause severe conflict. Deflect, avoid, or minimize the political dialogue. Bring up safe go-to discussion topics like recent or upcoming vacations, new movies of interest or great places to dine or shop.

8 c b Ñ h ' k c f f m ' U V c i h ' \ c T h e r e i s a l l o f c u l t u r a l p r e s s u r e d u r i n g t h e h o l i d a y s . W e t e n d t o c o m p a r e o u r s e l v e s w i t h t h e s e i d e a l i z e d n o t i o n s o f p e r f e c t f a m i l i e s a n d p e r f e c t h o l i d a y s . B u t i n f a c t , m o s t p e o p l e h a v e l e s s t h a n p e r f e c t h o l i d a y g a t h e r i n g s - t h e y h a v e Z U a] ` m ' h Y b g] c b ž ' a Y ` U b W \ c ` m ž ' U b X ' X f m ' h i f _ Y m ' h c c d e n y t h e m . A c k n o w l e d g e t h e d i s c o m f o r t & c o m m i t t o w o r k i n g o n t h a t a f t e r t h e h o l i d a y s .

Manage your expectations. Inoculate yourself from being disappointed by having reasonable goals for the holiday season. Anticipate that some things will work out as hoped and some might not go according to your anticipated plans. Everything passes. Nothing is permanent.

Focus on what matters. Stop to acknowledge. Be present and mindful of your life and all in it that you are grateful for. Appreciate all that is positive and remain open to the possibilities.

If you or your family member need support during the holiday season, please call the Office of Employee Assistance at 305.248.2469 and let us be of help.

