

## 8 Tips for a Less Stressful Holiday Season



The stores are in full Christmas mode, and as you drive through your neighborhood you can see houses sparkling with lights and beautifully decorated Christmas trees. Yes, the holiday season is here! While some folks enjoy all the craziness that the holiday season has to offer, others find the whole thing a bit overwhelming. Although this year is bound to be a bit different, there are still many reasons to feel anxious or stressed as the holidays approach. Below are a few practical tips that just might help get you through unscathed.

- **Acknowledge your feelings** - even if you are someone who normally enjoys this time of year, the holidays can bring out some big feelings. It's ok to take a moment to cry or express your feelings. Don't force yourself to feel happy every second of every day.
- **Reach out** - if you are feeling lonely or perhaps isolated due to restrictions related to the pandemic, reach out to family or friends virtually. You can also seek out websites, social media sites, virtual events or online support groups.
- **Be realistic** - remember the meals, the decorations, and the get togethers don't have to be perfect. In fact, this year particularly, they don't even have to be the same as usual. Find new ways to celebrate with friends and family.
- **Set aside differences** - if you are getting together with family or old friends, put aside any grievances and try to be understanding if others get upset. They may be feeling holiday stress too.
- **Stick to a budget** - before you go shopping for gifts or food, set an amount that you can afford to spend and then stick to it.
- **Plan** - mark on your calendar specific days for shopping, baking, wrapping, and delivering gifts, etc. Also, consider making a grocery list before shopping or ordering gifts online.
- **Learn to say no** - this year there will likely be fewer social activities to attend, but there might be other pulls on your time. Keep some balance by choosing what's important or necessary and skip the rest if you are feeling stressed.
- **Do not abandon healthy habits** - try to keep your exercise regime intact as much as possible, and don't let holiday eating become a free-for-all. That just adds to your stress and feelings of guilt.