

## Tips to stay stress-free during the holiday season

The holidays can be a joyful time, offering a chance to reconnect with friends and family. But they can also be stressful. You may not be able to avoid stressful situations during the holidays. But you can plan to respond to them in a healthy way.

Here are some ideas:

- **Know your spending limit.** Lack of money is one of the biggest causes of stress during the holiday season. This year, set a budget. It's OK to tell your child that a certain toy costs too much.
- **Give something personal.** You can show love and caring with any gift that is meaningful and personal. It doesn't have to cost a lot. Or use words instead of an expensive gift to let people know how important they are to you. Make a phone call or write a note and share your feelings.
- **Get organized.** Make lists or use an appointment book to keep track of tasks to do and events to attend.
- **Share the tasks.** You don't have to do everything yourself. Share your "to do" list with others. Spend time with friends and family while you share tasks like decorating, wrapping gifts, and preparing the holiday meal.
- **Learn to say no.** This will give you more time to say "yes" to events that you do want to attend.
- **Be realistic.** Focus on the traditions that make holidays special for you and your family. And remember that just because it's a holiday, family problems don't go away. If you have a hard time being around your relatives, it's OK to set limits on your time at events and visits.
- **Take breaks from group activities.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Spend a little time by yourself if you can. Meditate, or do some relaxation breathing. Go for a short walk.
- **Keep a regular sleep, meal, and exercise schedule. Limit your alcohol.** Taking care of yourself will help you deal with stressful situations during the holidays.
- **Get support if you need it.** Holidays can sometimes trigger depression. They can be especially hard if you are already dealing with the death of a loved one or the breakup of a relationship. You may feel embarrassed to ask for help, or you may think that you'll get over "the blues" on your own. But most people need treatment to get better. Talk with your doctor about counselling and medicine for depression.