



HELPING HANDS



Navigating the Holiday Season

Holidays are joyful times of festive celebrations with family and friends. The holidays can also be a time filled with memories that may cause you to be sad, thinking about loved ones no longer in your life. If you feel the holidays bearing down on you, you need to plan. Here are ten steps to help during the holidays:

Ten Steps for Happy Holidays

1) **Set Realistic Expectations.** Most holiday depression is caused by unrealistic expectations. Will you be the receiver of holiday joy or the giver of joy? Plan how to achieve that goal and keep your expectations in mind, no matter what image is promoted by the media.

2) **Set a Budget.** Avoid going into debt that might make you feel guilty and depressed. Plan, shop sales, compromise and stick to your budget. How much money will you devote to this holiday?

3) **Avoid Hectic Schedules.** Get enough rest. Sit down with family and discuss your calendar. Eliminate activities that you don't enjoy. Buy treats within budget instead of always baking and making.

4) **Regroup and revitalize.** Set aside time for your favorite holiday story or movie. Create your own holiday environment, one with new traditions that will sustain, nurture, and calm you. Use lots of lights to balance the shorter days.

5) **Make Plans.** Get Structure! Participate in community holiday events, parades, socials, etc. Better yet, plan your own party. Include those who've lost spouses or whose families are far away. Plan a fun post-holiday activity to look forward to later.

6) **Avoid Family Differences.** Heal past hurts through forgiveness or "letting go." Share fun stories of family members now gone. Build an oral history to pass down with love and appreciation.

7) **Help Those Less Fortunate.** Visit a nursing home or help a less fortunate family. Volunteer at a shelter or soup kitchen. Make a list of blessings. Include challenges that may have built new strengths.



8) **Cultivate Spirituality.** Recognize and explore your spiritual beliefs during this season. Honor your customs and the beliefs behind them. Share and discuss them with family and friends.

9) **Avoid Excesses.** Don't eat or drink too much. Practice moderation with holiday favorites. Stick with a healthy, high protein diet. Keep your blood sugar stable to avoid mood swings.

10) **What the EAP Can Do.** If these tips don't help you feel better about the anticipated stress brought about by the holiday season, the EAP can help. The EAP will help you tackle the holiday blues and the empty feelings that you might

be facing during this time of year. You don't have to suffer in silence or alone. Contact your EAP Representative listed on the next page for some free, confidential help through the holiday season.



Anticipating Holiday Stress

The festive season is here! It is time to take the well- deserved break from a hectic routine, and what better way to ring in the New Year than spending time with your family and closest friends!

Holiday Stress Can Be Anticipated

Take these easy pre-emptive measures to ensure that the time-off leaves you with wonderful memories and a positive frame of mind that extends well beyond the holiday season.

Have a 'To-Do' List

Have a 'to-do' list for fun, togetherness, and leisure: Trying to do too much is the number one cause of holiday stress. This season make a list of things you must do. Involve your family, including the children, in planning fun-activities that you all can enjoy together. Plan enough time for leisure, include a visit to the spa or relaxing with a good book at home.

Make Connections With "Important People"

Connect with 'important' people in your life: Positive, nurturing relationships are an essential. The holidays offer the perfect occasion to reconnect with old friends and extended family members.

Commit to Helping Someone

There is more happiness in giving than in receiving. Make a conscious effort to assist someone in need. Make it a family activity, with everyone contributing to the cause. A good deed will not only add to your "happiness quotient" it will also help you develop a greater sense of gratitude for all that you do have.

Maintain a 'Happiness' Journal

Start a journal or a blog for capturing the holiday magic, and the moments of joy in your everyday life. Journal about "what's going well". Documenting happy events helps you create more of them.

The exercise will help you focus on all that's good in your life and feel more up- beat in general.

Holidays are certainly about creating memories that last a lifetime. Feeling truly rejuvenated requires forward thinking and a positive approach for beating holiday stress.

IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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2021
<u>Holiday Dates</u>
<u>Hanukkah</u>
December 25- January 2, 2025
<u>Christmas</u>
December 25
<u>Kwanzaa</u>
December 26- January 1, 2025