

Holiday Stress

The holidays can be stressful for everyone to some extent. For those who actively participate in holiday celebrations, shopping preparations and family events can be overwhelming. Many people feel out-of-sync with the hustle and bustle of the season. Those who do not celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah may feel excluded or imposed upon.

A person who has recently suffered a loss, trauma, or illness may find it difficult to carry on the usual traditions. Even the most well-intentioned reunions can induce tensions, fights, and miscommunications.

Whatever your situation, there are many proactive choices you can make to deal with holiday stress and blues. Here are some strategies:

Acknowledge intense feelings

Give yourself permission to feel depressed, angry, sad or lonely. Cope with these feelings through talking, exercising, and writing. Avoid situations that stress or upset you.

If you feel obligated to attend a gathering where you feel uncomfortable, plan to stay a short time. While those around you may be overindulging in food or drink, you can make conscious choices about whether or how much you consume.

If you are in recovery, seek out extra meetings and/or drug/alcohol free events. Remember, the holiday season will soon be over; the passage of time will help you get back to normal.



Get support!

Try not to isolate yourself completely. To avoid loneliness, plan to be with friends or volunteer in your community to help those less fortunate than yourself. If you're far from your loved ones, use the phone. Start your own traditions that feel comfortable to you.

Don't overlook your own needs

Have fun. Expose yourself to humor. Give at a level that feels comfortable to you (in terms of time, money and energy). Prioritize your time; don't overwhelm yourself with too much to do. Even though this is a time of "giving to others," give yourself plenty of self-care and attention, including rest and quiet time.

Employee Assistance staff are available to meet with employees or family members who are experiencing difficulties. Call for a free, confidential appointment at 510-643-7754

Employee Assistance • 2222 Bancroft Way, Suite 3100 • Berkeley, CA 94720

Phone: 510-643-7754 • Email: employeeassistance@berkeley.edu

Website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu/bewellatwork