

Managing Holiday Stress



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The holidays can be stressful for everyone to some extent. Preparing can be overwhelming for those who actively participate in celebrations. Many people may feel out of sync with the hustle and bustle of the season. Those who do not celebrate may feel excluded or imposed upon. Whatever your situation, you can make many proactive choices to deal with holiday stress and blues. Here are some strategies.

Acknowledge intense feelings

It's hard to cope with difficult emotions if you don't acknowledge them. Cope by talking, exercising, writing, etc. Avoid or limit situations that stress or upset you. If you feel obligated to attend a gathering where you feel uncomfortable, plan to stay a short time.

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.

Try not to isolate yourself completely

Plan ways you will connect with others. Consider volunteering at a local organization or plan ways to connect with your support system and/or community. Start your own traditions that you can look forward to.

Don't overlook your own needs

Eat, sleep, get sun, etc. Try to practice self-compassion. Give at a level that feels comfortable to you (in terms of time, money, and energy). Don't overwhelm yourself by doing too much. Take time for self-care including rest and quiet time.

Get Support

All UC Berkeley students can book a free UHS counseling appointment on eTang or by calling (510) 642-9494. For after-hours support, please call the 24/7 line at (855) 817-5667.