



Coping With The Holidays From LifeResources - Member Assistance Program

For some people, the holidays bring unwelcome guests - stress and depression. And it's no wonder. In an effort to pull off a perfect Hallmark holiday, you might find yourself facing a dizzying array of demands - work, parties, shopping, baking, cleaning, caring for kids on school break or elderly parents, and scores of other chores.

Holiday stress is often the result of three main trigger points. Understanding these trigger points can help you plan ahead on how to accommodate them. Here are the three issues that commonly trigger holiday stress:

- **Relationships.** Relationships can cause turmoil, conflict or stress at any time. But tensions are often heightened during the holidays. Family misunderstandings and conflict can intensify - especially if you're all thrust together for several days. Conflicts are bound to arise with so many needs and interests to accommodate. On the other hand, if you're facing the holidays without a loved one, you may find yourself especially lonely or sad.
- **Finances.** Like your relationships, your financial situation can cause stress at any time of the year. Overspending during the holidays on gifts, travel, food and entertainment can increase stress as you try to make ends meet while ensuring that everyone on your shopping list is happy.
- **Physical demands.** The strain of shopping, attending social gatherings and preparing holiday meals can wipe you out. Feeling exhausted can increase your stress, creating a vicious cycle. Exercise and sleep - good antidotes for stress and fatigue - may take a back seat to chores and errands. High demands, stress, lack of exercise, and overindulgence in food and drink - these are the ingredients for holiday illness.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/MH00030>

For more information please call

1.800.759.8122





Travel Tips For The Holidays From LifeResources - Member Assistance Program

Traveling is, for many people, as much a part of the holiday season as family get-togethers, parties, and gift-giving. While traveling any time can be a major source of stress, holiday travel can be regarded among the true potential burnout-inducing experiences. Although you can't *eliminate* the stress of traveling loaded with gifts and baggage, you can take steps to retain control of your sanity during the trip.

Give yourself enough time.

This upshot of every travel advice column warrants repeating: whatever your mode of travel, allow yourself more time than you can possibly imagine that you will need when traveling for the holidays. This is particularly important for heavy-travel days. On these days, just about everything - check-in lines, finding a cab, airport parking - can be expected to take longer than usual. Knowing that you have adequate time to deal with any unexpected occurrences can help prevent anxiety and stress. If you can't get away from work, take some work with you. Sitting in an airport lounge working or reading is far more relaxing than sitting in a traffic-stalled taxi 20 minutes before your flight departs.

Make a few contingency plans.

Think about the truly unexpected- you drive to the airport and the parking lots are full, or a snowstorm is approaching your destination city. Always check weather, traffic, and parking reports before departing, and have some backup ideas (leave earlier, leave later, use another mode of transportation) ready to prevent panic.

Treat yourself.

Treat yourself to something special to lift your mood and take your mind off the stresses of travel. Examples might be a new book you've been wanting to read or a leisurely breakfast on departure day. Take advantage of airport facilities to keep yourself as relaxed and comfortable as possible. Larger airports are now offering spa and health/beauty services, including back and neck massages, for stressed travelers. Try to keep your spirits up and you'll be much better equipped to handle any major stressors in your path. <http://stress.about.com/cs/holidaysurvival/a/aa111600.htm>

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After The Holidays

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Keeping everything organized 'after' the holiday season, will ensure that next year's holiday is merrier than ever. Here are 4 simple ideas.

1. HAVE AN UN-DECORATING PARTY

Set a date to undecorate. Get family and friends involved, and you'll get it all done in no time! Make it a party. After everything is stored away and cleaned up, enjoy food, music and conversation with everyone who helped.

2. STORE SMART

Do your best to keep all of your holiday decorations in one or two containers. You won't need these things until next year, so store them in an out-of-the-way place. I have an area in my home for my year-round holiday decorations. All the Christmas decorations are in one container, and all of the other holiday decorations (Easter, Halloween, etc) are stored in another container.

3. UPDATE YOUR HOLIDAY CARD LIST

The very best time to update your holiday card list for next year, is at the end of this year's holiday season. Add, modify or delete as needed, and your list will be updated and ready to use in December. P.S. If you missed sending a holiday card to someone this year, send him/her a New Year's card instead!

4. KEEP A HOLIDAY JOURNAL

A holiday journal is a wonderful place to keep track of things you'd like to remember from year to year. Perhaps you'd like to keep track of things such as what gifts were given/received, favorite holiday recipes, meals your family especially enjoyed, etc. A journal will help you keep track of everything.

<http://www.betterbudgeting.com>

For more information please call

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