

CCYP HAPPENINGS

December '22

ccypsd.org



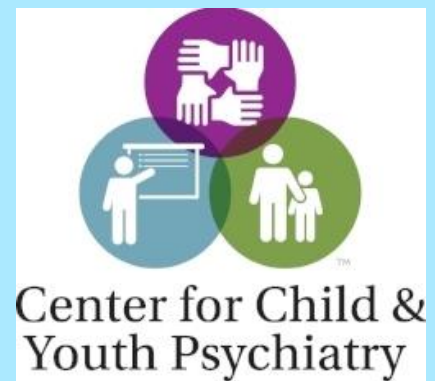
Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. The holidays often present a dizzying array of demands — cooking meals, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few. And if coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is spreading in your community, you may be feeling additional stress, or you may be worrying about your and your loved ones' health. You may also feel stressed, sad or anxious because your holiday plans may look different during the COVID-19 pandemic. But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

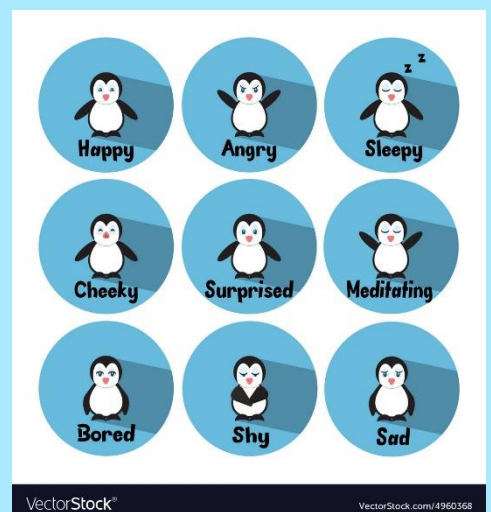
When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

1. **Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
2. **Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events or communities. Many may have websites, online support groups, social media sites or virtual events. They can offer support and companionship. If you're feeling stress during the holidays, it also may help to talk to a friend or family member about your concerns. Try reaching out with a text, a call or a video chat. Volunteering your time or doing something to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. For example, consider dropping off a meal and dessert at a friend's home during the holidays.



NEWSLETTER INSIGHTS

- ❖ The holidays
- ❖ Tips for coping during the holidays
- ❖ Winter solstice
- ❖ Holidays in other



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3. **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult, children or other relatives can't come to your home, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos. Or meet virtually on a video call. Even though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.
4. **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes away. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.
5. **Stick to a budget.** Before you do your gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

- **Try these alternatives:**

- ✓ Donate to a charity in someone's name.
- ✓ Give homemade gifts.
- ✓ Start a family gift exchange.

6. **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other activities. Consider whether you can shop online for any of your items. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for meal prep and cleanup.
7. **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.
8. **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

- **Try these suggestions:**

- ✓ Have a healthy snack before holiday meals so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
- ✓ Eat healthy meals.
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep.
- ✓ Include regular physical activity in your daily routine.
- ✓ Try deep-breathing exercises, meditation or yoga.
- ✓ Avoid excessive tobacco, alcohol and drug use.
- ✓ Be aware of how the information culture can produce undue stress, and adjust the time you spend reading news and social media as you see fit.

9. **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Find an activity you enjoy. Take a break by yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.



- ***Some options may include:***
 - ✓ Taking a walk at night and stargazing
 - ✓ Listening to soothing music
 - ✓ Reading a book

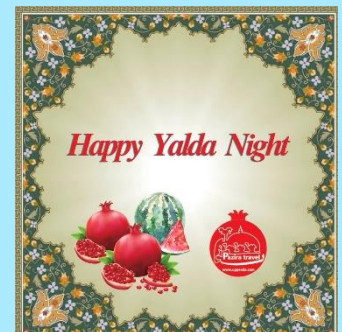
10. **Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.
11. **Take control of the holidays**
Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.



Winter Solstice (various cultures/religions)

Many cultures all over the world celebrated (and continue to celebrate) winter solstice even before Christmas came to be. In fact, the term Yule was derived from an old European holiday held at the start of the solar year known as the celebration of Light and the Rebirth of the Sun. Other winter solstice celebrations include:

1. **Feast of Juul (Scandinavian)** – A pre-Christian festival celebrated in December. On this day, a yule log is burned on the hearth in honor of the Scandinavian god, Thor.
2. **Yalda (Persia/Iran)** – Also called Shab -e-Yalda, it marks the last day of the Persian month of Azar during ancient times. It commemorates the victory of light over dark and the birth of the sun god Mithra.
3. **Saturnalia (ancient Roman)** – Aside from winter solstice, Saturnalia celebrates the end of the planting season. It was marked by games, feasts and gift-giving for several days.
4. **St. Lucia's Day (Scandinavian)** – On this day, girls dress up in white gowns with red sashes and wreaths of candles on their heads to honor the saint. It is also called the festival of lights as people light up fires to ward off spirits at night.



5. **Dong Zhi (Chinese)** – Dong Zhi celebrates the end of harvest and the arrival of winter. In the traditional Chinese celestial calendar, this falls between the 21st and 23rd of December. Families gather together to enjoy a feast in celebration.
6. **Gody (Poland)** – This is the tradition of showing forgiveness and sharing food. It was part of pre-Christian winter solstice celebrations.
7. **Chaomos (Kalasha, Pakistan)** – Kalasha or Kalash Kafir people celebrate for at least seven days. It involves ritual baths for purification, singing and chanting, a torchlight procession, dancing, bonfires, and feasts.
8. **St. Thomas Day/Sun God festival (Guatemala)** – December 21 is the feast day of St. Thomas the Apostle. Mayan Indians also hold a festival honoring the sun god on this day. It is celebrated with fanfare including colorful parades and the daring flying pole dance in Peru.
9. **Kwanzaa (African)** – Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday but a celebration of African heritage and culture. It is a seven-day celebration from December 26 to January 1 that features the lighting of the kinara each day, similar to the lighting of the menorah during Hanukkah. Each day is represented by a principle of Kwanzaa: 1st – umoja (unity), 2nd – kujichagulia (self-determination), 3rd – ujima (collective work and responsibility), 4th – ujamaa (cooperative economics), 5th – nia (purpose), 6th – kuumba (creativity), and 7th – imani (faith). If you want to greet a person celebrating this holiday, you say “Habari gani” (Swahili). They would reply with the principle for that day.
10. **Chinese New Year (Chinese)** – Chinese New Year marks the end of winter and the start of spring. It usually falls between January 21 and February 20 based on the lunar calendar (February 1 in 2022 and January 22 in 2023). The first day of celebration starts with the New Moon and ends on the Full Moon 15 days later. People indulge in feasts, watch dragon and lion dances and parades, light fireworks, and distribute luck money in red envelopes to children.
11. **Ramadan (Muslim)** – Ramadan is a month of daily fasting during daylight hours. It culminates in Eid-al-Fitr when they break the fast. The period is determined by the Islamic lunar calendar, which is why it falls on different dates each year. It was observed from the evening of April 1 to May 1 in 2022. The next time it will be in December to January will be in 2030. Aside from fasting, Muslims also give up bad habits during the season, pray more, read the Quran and attend services. Eid-al-Fitr is a time of celebration with the family, giving gifts and doing charitable works.



12. **Orthodox Christmas**– Members of the Orthodox Church celebrate Jesus' birth a week after December 25th and after all our usual celebrations have died down. They celebrate Christmas on January 7th or near this date. Why? It's a difference in calendars. Those who celebrate Christmas on December 25th are using the Gregorian calendar introduced in 1582. Those who were still using the Julian calendar (much of the Soviet Bloc and the Middle East) celebrated Christmas 13 days later. While most of these countries now follow the Gregorian calendar, many still observe religious holidays on the Julian dates. Traditionally, Orthodox Christians begin with a 40-day period of fasting before Christmas. After the Christmas Eve mass, families celebrate with feasts, joyful caroling, and other traditions. Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox faiths prepare 12 traditional dishes representing Christ's apostles. Ukrainian households also throw a spoonful of Kutia (a traditional dish made of wheat, honey and poppy seeds) up in the air to know what the year has in store for them. The more Kutia is stuck to the walls or ceiling, the more prosperous the year would be.



13. **Three King's Day (Christian)** – Also known as Epiphany, this marks the day the Three Wise Men visited the Christ child and brought him gifts. Christians celebrate this on the first Sunday after January 1. In Hispanic cultures, this is a day of gift-giving and other festivities.
14. **New Year's (secular)** – New Year's Eve, December 31, marks the last day in the Gregorian calendar. It is a night of merry-making marked with fireworks, parties, and feasts. Many people also observe rituals that are thought to give them good luck and help them start an auspicious year like serving certain food to bring wealth (black-eyed peas in the southern part of the US or seven round fruits in Asian countries), wearing polka-dots (to attract wealth), and making noise with fireworks to drive bad spirits away.



RESOURCES

Psychiatric Emergency Response Team 911

NAMI San Diego 619-543-1434

San Diego County Access and Crisis Line: (888) 724-7240