



Tips for mental wellness during the holidays!

How do you help control your stress level during the holidays? How can we stay mentally healthy during this season?

Depression and stress rates do increase during the holidays. Feelings of sadness, loneliness, and anger can intensify when contrasted with the joy expected of the holidays. We have some tips to help you get through and even thrive during this hectic season.

1. Keep your expectations balanced. You won't get everything you want, things will go wrong, and you won't feel like Bing Crosby singing White Christmas. Remember that everything doesn't have to be perfect and don't worry about things that are out of your control.
2. Don't try to do too much. Fatigue, over scheduling, and taking on too many tasks can dampen your spirits. Learn to say no, delegate as much as possible and manage your time wisely. If you choose to do less you will have more energy to enjoy the most important part of the season - friends and family.
3. Plan ahead. Many people don't go to the mall after Thanksgiving to avoid shopping stress and others do much of their party prep in advance.
4. Get connected. If you're feeling left out or isolated, then get out of the house and find some way to join in. There are hundreds of places you can go to hear music, enjoy the sights, or help those less fortunate.

5. Get some exercise and eat well. It's normal to eat more during the holidays, but be aware of how certain foods effect your mood. If you eat fats and sweets, you will have less energy, which can make you feel more stressed and run down. It can be very helpful to take a walk before and/or after a big holiday meal.
6. Budget! Create a reasonable spending plan and stick to it. Remember it's not about the presents, it's about the presence.
7. Mourn. It's okay to be sad if you're separated from or have lost loved ones. If you can't be with those you love make plans to celebrate when you can all be together.
8. Get some sun! Lots of folks suffer depression due to a lack of sunlight because of shorter days and bad weather. Using a full spectrum lamp for twenty minutes a day can improve this type of depression called SAD (seasonal affective disorder).
9. Forgive and Accept. If some of your relatives have always acted a fool or made you feel bad, chances are that won't change. Be prepared for it. If you know what you're getting into, it will be easier to not let them push your buttons. If things get uncomfortable go to a movie or for a drive and adjust your attitude.
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.