


SURVIVING THE FESTIVE SEASON

The festive season is, by its very nature, a busy and stressful time. Planning ahead and moderating our expectations can help enhance the sense of celebration and joy.

This fact sheet provides some information on common stressors during the festive season. It also has some ideas to take the edge off stress.

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The festive season is a time when we traditionally catch up with family and loved ones. This often involves travelling long distances to be together. Some people find they are fatigued after a busy year, while for others emotional issues rise to the surface. For many people, the festive season is one of the most difficult times of the year. It can be a time of increased loneliness and those who are grieving may be experiencing a greater sense of loss.

COMMON STRESSORS OF THE FESTIVE SEASON

- Financial stress- the festive season is an expensive time of the year and financial pressures are common. It is easy to fall into the trap of impulse buying and over spending.
- Over-indulgence in food and alcohol- festive celebrations present an enormous smorgasbord of opportunities to overindulge.
- Celebration Dinner - the expectation to provide a traditional gourmet extravaganza can be overwhelming.
- Heightened and unrealistic expectations - advertising and social media can create pressures to create a perfect event.
- Hectic Social Schedule - the calendar of work dinners, afterwork catchups with friends and colleagues, school and dancing concerts can be exhausting.
- Relationships - stress, anxiety, and depression are common during the festive season. Some families experience increased family conflict.
- Loneliness - many people experience feelings of isolation and loneliness that can make this a very stressful time.
- Bereavement - all special celebrations, including the festive season can intensify feelings of loss and grief.



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SOME SURVIVAL TIPS

Create memories

- Let your focus be on the making of happy memories rather than the size and number of gifts.
- Involve the children in tasks. Let them help you. This may mean letting go of the need for everything to be perfect.
- Continue your family traditions and rituals, or create new ones. These can help loved ones feel connected.

Practise moderation

- Consider moderating your eating and drinking.
- If you are concerned about over-eating and overindulging in alcohol, plan some after lunch activities, for example, a game of backyard cricket or a beach walk.
- Keep track of your drinking, especially if you are driving.
- Delegate tasks. No-one can, or needs to do everything.
- Plan your budget and set boundaries for your shopping. Overspending can be bad for your mental health as well as your bank balance.
- Organise shopping ahead of time to avoid last minute and impulse spending.

Be Kind

- Be kind to each other and to yourself. Holiday celebrations can bring up feelings of sadness, loss and regret.
- Take a break from social media. Resist the urge to post every detail of your family time together.

Managing loneliness

- If you know you will be on your own during this season, start planning ahead to be with people you like and who can support you.
- Attend community events.

Practise self-care

- Taking time to care for yourself can have a calming effect on those around you.
- Learn to say no. Listen to your emotions, and know your limits.
- Make time for yourself to relax and rehydrate. Be active: get outdoors for a brisk walk, ride or swim. Maintain a good sleep routine
- Take time to reflect and be grateful.
- There is no perfect celebration but there is one that is perfect for you. Make it your own. Be mindful and present and enjoy the day.

Adjust expectations

- Acknowledge if it has been a difficult year and adjust your expectations of the festive season.
- Look for joy in being with loved ones, spending time and sharing stories.

Access support

- If you are finding it difficult to cope during this busy time you may wish to engage with workplace supports such as your Employee Assistance Program, or other supports such as your General Practitioner, a psychologist or counsellor.



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