

Holiday Survival Tips

Mental Health Association of Montgomery County



Limit Stress and Anxiety

◇ Set limits.

Establishing boundaries on what you will do and what you won't do in advance of family gatherings will make it easier to say "no." Understand that it's okay to refuse last minute additions to your already full holiday to-do list.

◇ Ask yourself do I really HAVE to do this?

Use your time and energy wisely as to not burn yourself out. When looking at your to-do list items, ask yourself is this something that HAS to be done? What are the consequences of foregoing this task?

◇ Don't dwell on how things could have been, accept them for what they are.

If you couldn't afford to get your kids that super expensive game console they wanted, it's okay. If you ran out of time to cook your aunt's favorite dessert, it's okay. Set realistic expectations for yourself and loved ones. Understand **there are things beyond your control, and that's okay.**

◇ Take time for yourself.

The holidays are generally about family and doing for others. Despite all that's on your plate this season, don't forget to ensure that your own mental health needs are being taken care of. **Take time for yourself** when needed.

Fight the Winter Blues

◇ Limit Caffeine and Alcohol.

Alcohol is a depressant, and can make an already low mood even lower. Limit your alcohol intake, and avoid binge drinking. Try replacing your coffee with caffeine-free tea, as caffeine can suppress levels of serotonin and negatively impact your mood.

◇ Plan Activities.

When it's cold and dark outside, it's easy to get sucked into the pattern of work, couch, remote. Try to plan at least one outing each week. Whether it's by yourself or with friends - get out of the house!

◇ Eat Healthy.

Avoid processed foods like white breads, rice and sugar, which can lower energy levels and affect your mood. Remember to drink lots of water and eat more fruits and vegetables.

◇ Exercise.

Aim to get moving for at least 15-20 minutes a day, whether it's simply taking a walk around your neighborhood, stretching while catching up on TV shows or exercising with your favorite workout video on YouTube.

◇ Natural Light.

Soak up some sun! Get out of the office for your lunch break, sit by windows whenever possible and keep the curtains open in mornings and afternoons.