



During the holiday season, stress levels tend to spike and can quickly become unmanageable. Whether you are feeling stressed on a regular basis or just during a particular time of year, there are healthy ways to manage your emotions. Here are some tips and suggestions to help you deal with stress during the holiday season.

1. Identify and express your feelings. If there is something that is causing you anxiety or sadness it is important to share them with someone you trust. Give yourself permission to talk about your feeling and even express emotion through crying. Situations such as the loss of a family member, distance from family and friends, and financial stress can be a difficult burden but you don't have to deal with it alone.
2. Make connections with others. If you feel lonely or isolated seek out support and assistance from people in the community. This can be done by volunteering, attending community functions, or enjoying other social events. Often by taking the step to reach out for support and companionship you are able to make new connections that will help you long into the future.
3. Set clear and healthy boundaries with others. Learn to say no when necessary and know your personal limits. Understanding your limitations can take time and reflection and can be different from person to person. Overextending yourself can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Try to be honest and direct about what you need by having a clear and honest conversation with others.
4. Make a budget that is within your financial means. When you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend and try not to make impulsive buys. If you are unable to afford gifts think of alternative ideas such as writing personal letters, making a gift, or creating a special memory with your loved one.
5. Continue to use healthy eating or exercising habits. Make sure to get a good night's sleep, drink plenty of water, and find time to exercise even if it's only a quick walk.
6. Make some time for yourself. Spending even 15-20 minutes alone may help you feel refreshed and better prepared to manage the rest of your day. Find something that is enjoyable to you that can help reduce stress.

Some options may include:

- Take a walk
  - Take several slow, deep breaths in and out
  - Work to relax each muscle group from the tips of your toes to the top of your head
  - Listen to music
  - Exercise
  - Journal
  - Read a book
7. Ask for professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, unable to sleep, irritable and frustrated. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.