

Coping with the Holidays: Tips for self-care

Learn to say no.

Saying yes when it is best not to take on something new can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. Protect adequate time for yourself.

Be realistic.

The holidays can't be perfect and don't have to be just like last year. As individuals and families change and grow, traditions and rituals do as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones for yourself or with others.

Reach out.

If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out connection with others at work, community, or religious spaces or by attending social events. Make a trip to the library or museum. Volunteer your time to help others. Just being in attendance at an event or in a space with complete strangers can bring about a sense of support and companionship. Making connections of any kind can lift your spirits and broaden your sense of community.

Acknowledge your feelings.

If you won't or can't be with loved ones, if you are in mourning, or if you've been through other recent adjustments, realize that it's normal to feel down. It is important to take time to recognize and express your feelings. You can't force happy feelings just because it's the holiday season, and sometimes simply recognizing the hard feelings takes the edge off of them and provides you with a new perspective.

Healthy Habits.

This time of year tends to become a free-for-all, but overindulgence only increases levels of stress and guilt. Focus on balance and moderation when eating or imbibing. Get plenty of sleep. Incorporate physical activity into each day. Drink extra water. If you are in recovery, maintain your sobriety one day at a time. Take a break when you need it.

Get Support.

Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, bothered by physical concerns, unable to sleep, irritable, hopeless, or having trouble with routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional. Use the Get Help Directory on the Dissonance website to find a therapist or other treatment provider.