

UNDERSTANDING HOLIDAY STRESS!

Once again, we come to the Holiday Season, a deeply religious time that each of us observes, in his own way, by going to the mall of his choice...Dave Barry

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Thinking about the holidays often reminds us of the past when times were easier, we were more innocent, and we were closer with our families
- ❖ The holidays also often remind us of the losses of loved ones, unresolved family issues, and painful childhood experiences that are still open “wounds”
- ❖ Thinking about the holidays causes us to create unrealistically high expectations of being happy which can never be met leading to disappointment and frustration
- ❖ Holiday stress can come from the heightened demands of entertaining, attending parties, buying gifts, cooking, decorating, cleaning, and sending cards
- ❖ Holiday stress is also realistically caused by crowded malls, unrelenting commercials about buying gifts, increased traffic, longer lines, and more visiting guests
- ❖ Stress from the holidays can be due to reflecting on family changes including marriages, deaths, divorces, births, relocations, and remarriages
- ❖ Many people are overwhelmed due to pressure to make it the best and perfect holiday
- ❖ Economically, today more people are worrying about having the resources to spend, keeping their jobs, and not losing their financial safety net
- ❖ With the unprecedented abundance of discounts and sales, people often feel stressed to take advantage of these sales and worry about getting the best deal
- ❖ Advertising, too, creates the illusion that joy and happiness come from buying some product that you can gift wrap, wear, play with, or eat
- ❖ We often deal with holiday stress by too much eating, drinking, spending, socializing, partying, shopping, and having too many activities
- ❖ Physical responses to holiday stress include headaches, exhaustion, excessive eating and drinking, stomach aches, insomnia, and isolation
- ❖ Other reactions include feeling impatient, depressed, worried, irritable, lonely and sad

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Acknowledge your feelings and watch how your body is reacting to the holidays
- ❖ Take time for yourself; go for a long walk, get a massage, read, write, meditate, etc.
- ❖ Have realistic expectations and don't expect everything you do to be perfect
- ❖ Do not compare this holiday to the past and focus on the present
- ❖ Eat well, get enough sleep, and exercise
- ❖ Start a new holiday tradition
- ❖ Set a holiday budget and don't equate love with how many expensive gifts you buy
- ❖ Share holiday responsibilities so no one feels overly pressured
- ❖ Don't let your “to-do” list control you; you control the list
- ❖ Limit your drinking or don't drink at all
- ❖ Pace yourself; set a schedule, plan your activities, and do only what you can
- ❖ Remember the values of the holidays and do not let shopping define the holiday
- ❖ Prioritize the important activities, visits, shopping, etc. and let go of impossible goals
- ❖ Do not put all your energy into getting things done in one day, spread them out
- ❖ Fight loneliness by volunteering to help others or being with family and friends
- ❖ Seek professional help if you are feeling persistently sad, anxious, or overwhelmed

WE CAN HELP!

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