



Enriching Lives

## MANAGING STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

**STRESS BUSTERS** – The holiday season can be very stressful for anyone, as it represents a very busy time of the year. Individuals become consumed with cleaning, decorating, purchasing gifts, wrapping gifts, writing cards, holiday food shopping, cooking, baking, hosting and attending gatherings. People often report feeling overwhelmed, exhausted and dissatisfied. Observing holidays can be a time of celebration and enjoyment, when stress is managed effectively. Below are useful tips in managing the stress associated with the holidays.

### Tips on Managing Stress:

- **Examine your expectations.** Can a person working full-time outside the home create an event that a person who stays full-time at home can? Maintain realistic expectations that are attainable given time and responsibility constraints. Know your limits.
- **Keep it simple.** Don't expect to do accomplish all the tasks yourself. Get the family involved by receiving feedback and share the responsibilities by organizing what each individual is responsible for. For instance, you may share cooking responsibilities.
- **Be organized.** Create a prioritized "To-Do" list which will assist with planning ahead and time-management. This will allocate additional time that can be spent in wisely, such as having quality time with friends and family. Keep a calendar of upcoming activities.
- **Stick to a budget.** A family should agree on the amount of money to be spent and how it will be used. If you have a large family, draw names for a gift exchange. Give baked goods or create hand-made crafts as gifts.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat right, get enough sleep, drink plenty of water and engage in regular physical activity. Ensure you have a healthy mind and body through activities like yoga, taking a short walk, going to the gym or playing sports that will enhance both your physical and mental health. Feeling well will improve your ability to deal with the demands related to the holiday and will positively impact your mood during those tasks.
- **Practice gratitude.** Remember those individuals who may be hungry and/or homeless. Be grateful for the various aspects of your life that are enriching. Develop a holiday ritual which takes 10 minutes that allows each family member describe what they are thankful for.
- **Practice optimism.** Stay positive. Know that you will be able to cope with whatever surprises you may encounter and expect the best. When you expect the best, you are more likely to identify it when it happens.
- **Reach out for support.** Accepting help from supportive friends and family can improve your ability to manage stress. You may receive the opportunity to provide a useful suggestion to someone; which allows one to experience a sense of competency and feel well that one was helpful to another. If you continue to feel overwhelmed by stress, you may want to talk to a psychologist, who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors.

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