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THINKING CHICKASAW

STRENGTH • BALANCE • HARMONY

6 MENTAL HEALTH TIPS

TO MANAGE HOLIDAY STRESS

The holidays often bring joy, traditions and connection, but can also come with stress, pressure and unrealistic expectations. By making a few mindful choices, you can navigate the season with more balance.

1. ACCEPT IMPERFECTION (AND HELP)

Sometimes, we take on too much trying to create the "perfect holiday memories." Holiday celebrations do not need to be flawless to be meaningful. Letting go of the pressure for perfection allows you to enjoy little moments as they unfold. If you notice that you are overwhelmed, ask for support. If someone offers to take over a task, allow yourself to graciously accept if it gives you any feeling of relief.

THINK IT OVER: What are some holiday tasks you feel comfortable turning over to someone else?

2. PLAN AHEAD

Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, connecting with friends and other holiday activities. This can provide things to look forward to, rather than feeling overwhelming. Remember to set aside time for rest as well.

FIND YOUR BALANCE: While waiting in line or stuck in traffic, take a moment to reflect on the things you are grateful for.

3. MANAGE EXPECTATIONS AND FINANCES

Set a realistic budget before shopping to avoid financial strain. Homemade gifts, charitable donations or drawing names for a family gift exchange can simplify the tradition of gift giving while still spreading holiday cheer.

TALK ABOUT IT: What are some unique and budget-friendly ways to exchange gifts with loved ones? Ask family and friends for their ideas too.

4. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

It is not realistic to feel "holiday joy" all the time. As families grow and change, it is natural to feel sadness, loneliness or grief. Having a plan (like calling a friend, watching a favorite movie or going for a walk) can help when emotions run high.

CREATE HARMONY: Look for community groups, local events, opportunities to volunteer or virtual gatherings when you cannot be with a loved one in person. Even a scheduled phone call can help ease feelings of isolation.

5. BE MINDFUL OF SEASONAL CHANGES

Shorter winter days can trigger Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). If you notice ongoing sadness or low energy, consider speaking with a health care provider about treatment options like light therapy or counseling.

GOOD IDEAS: What are some activities that are fun or relaxing?

6. PRIORITIZE HEALTHY HABITS

While it is natural to indulge, balance treats with nourishing meals, physical activity and good sleep. Mindfulness activities like yoga, deep breathing or meditation can also support well-being.

WELLNESS STRENGTH: Think of two or three things you can do to focus on your self-care during the holidays, and be intentional about doing them.

RESOURCES:

- 7 Holiday Mental Health Tips for Families
- Information about Seasonal Affective Disorder
- Mindfulness and Meditations for the Holiday Blues