

Holidays and Mental Health

The goals of the holiday season are often **joy** and **connection**. However, the pressure of these expectations may cause feelings of anxiety or depression in some individuals.

The holidays might feel stressful due to disruptions to regular routines, family gatherings where conflict or discomfort may be present, grief following the loss of a loved one, and feelings of loneliness. This can negatively impact our mental health.

Here are a few tips to navigate family stress during the holidays:

- 1) **Set realistic expectations** – It is common to idealize the holiday season and set high expectations. However, it is important to acknowledge that families and holidays are not always perfect, but you can still enjoy the season even when it is imperfect. Be aware of this as you enter the holidays!
- 2) **Create a stress-reduced environment** – Set up games to interact with family in a positive way, or play calming music.
- 3) **Take breaks** – Find time in your days to get away and have moments to yourself, such as going for a walk after a meal.
- 4) **Consider your triggers** – Try to limit involvement in discussions or activities that may cause you stress.

You can also implement these strategies to minimize the stress of holiday planning:

- 1) **Create a schedule and to-do list** - Prioritize important tasks and give them to family members to help tackle the holidays as a team.
- 2) **Set a budget** - Create a reasonable budget and stick to it to minimize the financial burden of the holidays. Writing a list of anticipated expenses and tracking when you make purchases can help you manage your spending.
- 3) **Pick and choose social obligations** – Attend the events you truly want to be at and decline going to others. Then, set aside time to relax.

Finally, prioritizing your well-being before and after social obligations can make it feel more manageable. Caring for your physical and mental well-being can look like eating well to fuel your body, or picking up an old hobby you don't normally have time for.

Happy Holidays from Magna Wellness!



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