

## Keeping Stress in Check During the Holidays

- ✓ **Remember What's Important** – Commercialism can overshadow the true sentiment of the holiday season. When your holiday expense list is running longer than your monthly budget, you should scale back. Remind that family, friends, and the relationships in your life are what matter most.
- ✓ **Set Realistic Expectations.** No holiday celebration is perfect; expect a few hiccups and view them as opportunities to demonstrate flexibility and resilience. Create a realistic budget and remind your children that the holidays are not about expensive gifts.
- ✓ **Take Time for Yourself** – Taking care of yourself helps you to take better care of others in your life. Do something you enjoy...go for a walk, read something that interests you, or listen to your favorite music. By pacing yourself and slowing down for a little while, you may find more energy to accomplish your holiday goals.
- ✓ **Take Some Deep Breaths** – When you are stressed, your breathing tends to become shallow and your heart rate increases. Deliberate slow, deeper breathing will automatically put you in a more relaxed state.
- ✓ **Volunteer** – Many charitable organizations face new challenges because of difficult economic times. Find a local charity, such as a soup kitchen or a shelter where you and your family can volunteer together. Support the Salvation Army Operation Angle Tree Project! Helping others can put any hardships you have in perspective and build stronger family relationships.
- ✓ **Support Each Other** – Talk about stressors related to the holidays with your wingman, friends, and family. Learning how others are dealing with similar situations can help you work toward a solution.
- ✓ **Laugh** – A good laugh promotes a sense of well-being by releasing endorphins (the natural feel good chemical in the brain). Treat yourself and your family to a holiday comedy.

If you continue to feel overwhelmed, contact your Wing Director of Psychological Health, Dr. Roger A. De Noyelles, LCSW-R, for additional stress management resources.

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