

Coping with Holiday Stress

The holidays often bring a mixed bag of memories, experiences, thoughts and feelings. It is with this “mixed bag” idea that these suggestions on effectively dealing with holiday stress are offered.

For many, the holidays remind us of loved ones we have lost in the past, recent or remote. For others, it brings about thoughts of the family we wish we had or the stresses brought about by the “hustle and bustle” of the season. Any way we look at it, the upcoming holidays bring about a change in our normal schedule and places a greater demand on us. Whether the activities are considered good or bad, the end result is stress.

The following ideas are intended to be simple, yet effective ways to cope with the pressures that come with the season. The first is to not over-extend yourself and stay within your means. This pertains directly to finances, (the number one cause of conflict among couples), but also to how much socializing you can realistically enjoy during the short season. Resist impulses to over-buy, over-plan and over-travel. Your family and friends will enjoy your company much more if you are relaxed and rested.

Secondly, confide in close friends and family members about issues of concern to you and be open-minded about their ideas. Sometimes your friends and family can offer a different way to look at a problem that will open up a solution you never would have considered.

Finally, make it a point to participate in an activity that is fun and relaxing to you. That may include a quiet fishing trip, an outing to the movies on Christmas Day, a family skiing trip, or just a ride around the neighborhood to look at the Christmas lights.

Relax, don't forget to breathe and share some goodwill during the holiday season. If you just can't help feeling overwhelmed, do not hesitate to seek professional counseling. Sometimes the bustle of the holidays will magnify already existing problems. Asking for help shows a determination to feel better and live a more fulfilling life.