

GETTING THROUGH
THE HOLIDAYS...
SOME HELPFUL
HINTS FROM:



THE ME WE
FAMILY
EDUCATION &
SUPPORT GROUP



"MAKING A DIFFERENCE,
NOW THAT YOU KNOW"



Dear Friends,

As the calendar turns toward the end of the year, we recognize that the holiday season can bring a mix of emotions—excitement, warmth, and sometimes stress.

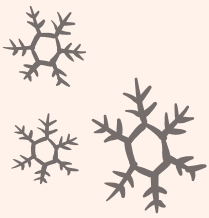
For those of us supporting a loved one through the challenges of addiction or celebrating their journey in recovery with them, this time of year can feel complicated. The pressure to create a "perfect" holiday sometimes clashes with the crucial need to protect the sobriety, boundaries, and well-being of our family. **Please remember that you are not alone in navigating this.**

We are sending you our warmest wishes for a peaceful, safe, and hopeful holiday season. Remember that we travel this journey together, and in our togetherness, we find strength, friendship, and connection. Remember, also if everything isn't perfect....life isn't about perfection, it's about progress, so be kind to yourself if you miss a couple of details. We have been reminded often that "Life is a journey, not a destination". So slow down, look around you, learn from your experiences and your mistakes, and find happiness and meaning in the path you are currently walking.

This year, we encourage you to prioritize self-care over perfection. Within this guide, you will find thoughtful tips and practical strategies designed to help you and your loved one navigate social gatherings, manage expectations, and truly connect with each other.

1. Plan for Social Gatherings Together (If Appropriate): If your loved one is in early recovery, social events can be high-risk.

- Communicate: Discuss which events feel safe and which might be too overwhelming. It's okay to say "no" to some invitations.
- Establish a Code Word: Agree on a non-obvious phrase or word your loved one can use if they need to leave a party immediately, giving you a chance to exit gracefully without explanation.
- Identify Allies: Before an event, quietly inform a trusted host or family member about your loved one's status so they can offer support or run interference if needed.



2. Manage the Presence of Alcohol: The holidays are often centered around celebratory drinks, which can be a significant trigger.

- Offer Alcohol-Free Options: Ensure there are plenty of festive, appealing non-alcoholic beverages available (e.g., sparkling cider, mocktails, special sodas). Make them easily accessible.
- Change the Focus: Center your traditions around activities that don't involve alcohol—like baking, playing games, or going for a winter walk.
- The "No Alcohol" Home Rule: If your loved one is spending time in your home, consider making your home a temporarily sober space for the visit. This is a powerful sign of support.

3. Lower Expectations for a "Perfect" Holiday: This year, the goal isn't a picture-perfect holiday; the goal is connection and recovery.

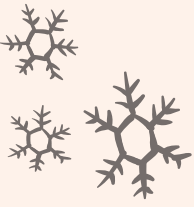
- Focus on the Present: Avoid rehashing past holidays or worrying too much about the future. Focus on the simple, positive moments you have right now.
- It's Okay to Be Flexible: If a tradition becomes stressful or triggers anxiety, it's okay to postpone it, change it, or skip it entirely this year.

4. Embrace New, Sober Traditions: Recovery often means letting go of old routines. The holidays are the perfect time to build new, meaningful rituals that center on well-being and connection, not substances.

- Volunteer Together: Spend a morning volunteering at a local charity, shelter, or food bank. Giving back is a powerful antidote to stress and self-focus.
- Family Activity Day: Dedicate one day to an activity that is completely new or hasn't been done before—a puzzle marathon, a family movie binge, or building a creative craft.
- The Gratitude Circle: Before opening gifts or having dinner, gather the family and have everyone share one specific thing they are genuinely grateful for this holiday season.

5. Self-Care Isn't Selfish: Activities for Family Members: The greatest gift you can give your loved one is a healthy, rested version of yourself. During the busy holiday season, it can be easy to put your own needs last. Use these simple, intentional activities to pause, recharge, and renew your strength.

- Do not skip your regularly scheduled support meeting(s). Put these meetings on your calendar first and treat them as non-negotiable holiday appointments.
- Dedicate 10 minutes each morning or evening to writing down three things: 1) A feeling you are currently experiencing (good or bad). 2) A boundary you upheld today. 3) A moment of gratitude.
- Engage in simple activities that bring comfort. Light a favorite scented candle, listen to calming music, enjoy a warm cup of herbal tea, or step outside for a breath of fresh, cold air.
- Recognize that saying "no" to an optional event, a request that overextends you, or a stressful conversation is a form of self-care. It preserves your energy for what truly matters.
- If you are able, reduce holiday pressure by simplifying one major task. Buy a pre-made meal component, order gifts online, or ask someone else to manage the wrapping.

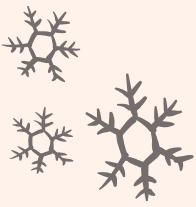


The holidays can highlight the pain of the past, but they also offer a chance for new, healthier traditions. Remember the strength and courage it takes to pursue recovery. Lean on your support network, be kind to yourselves, and know that you are not alone on this journey.

Wishing you and your loved ones a holiday season filled with grace, peace, and renewed hope.

All the best, Jim & Lori

God, grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot
change;
The courage to change the
things I can;
And the wisdom to know the
difference.



Start New Family Traditions



Check out holiday lights in your area. Get in the car, turn on your holiday playlist, and find brightly lit houses



I Am Thankful List

Add one thing you are thankful for each day for a week. You can turn this into a decoration by writing it on a piece of paper and creating a tree with the paper leaves.



Start the 'Elf on a Shelf' tradition. Your family will look for it every morning!



Put your PJ's on early and watch your favorite holiday movie. Snuggle up with your favorite cocoa!