

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



THE ME WE
FAMILY
EDUCATION &
SUPPORT GROUP

"MAKING A DIFFERENCE,
NOW THAT YOU KNOW"



The Truth About Holiday Spirits

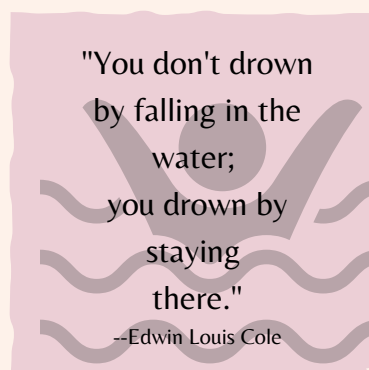
Many of us look forward to celebrations during the holidays, yet it is also a time when some people are more likely to drink beyond their limits than at other times of the year. Some people will suffer adverse consequences that range from fights to falls to traffic crashes. This holiday season, it is particularly important to take measures to protect your own health and that of your loved ones due to the coronavirus pandemic. This includes following the everyday practices recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading the coronavirus, as well as following guidelines for holiday celebrations and small gatherings.

Myths Persist:

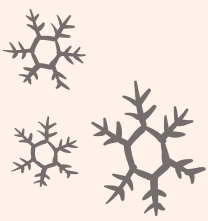
Despite the potential dangers, myths about drinking persist, which—for some—can prove fatal. Scientific studies supported by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism provide important information that challenges these widespread, yet incorrect, beliefs about how quickly alcohol affects the body and how long the effects of drinking last.

Alcohol's Effects Begin Quickly, Before You Know It! (to continue reading click [HERE](#)).

Reminders....



Did you
know...
November is
National
Gratitude
month?



Let's Drink To Your Health!

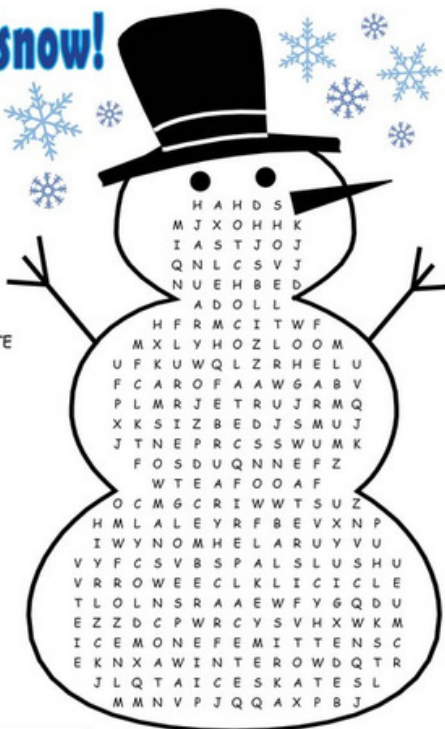


Drinking six to eight glasses of water per day can be important for many reasons:

- Water is part of your body's cooling system
- Water is "pure", in that it has no calories, sugar, stimulants, depressants, or chemical additives. It's an ideal diet aid, filling your stomach without adverse effects.
- Water protects your skin. It can help ward off wrinkles by promoting skin elasticity.
- Water protects your joints. It increases synovial fluid, something your body produces to lubricate joints.
- Water helps digestion. It is a natural laxative and can help prevent kidney stones.

Let it snow!

BLIZZARD
COAT
COLD
DECEMBER
EARMUFFS
FEBRUARY
FIREPLACE
FLURRIES
FROZEN
GLOVES
HOT CHOCOLATE
ICE
ICE SKATES
ICICLE
JANUARY
MITTENS
SCARF
SHOVEL
SLED
SLUSH
SNOWBALL
SNOWFLAKE
SNOWMAN
SWEATER
WINTER



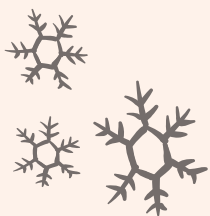
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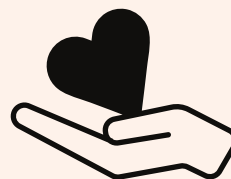
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THERE'S
always
SOMETHING TO BE
THANKFUL
for



4 Ways to Help Your Loved One in Recovery this Holiday Season



1. Talk to Your Loved One About Preparing Their Story

It's common for people to ask what you've been up to during holiday get-togethers. You don't want your loved one to be put in an awkward position or be caught off-guard. To help your loved one, start by talking to them about what they're comfortable saying and how much they want others to know about their struggles with addiction. Sharing your story is part of the personal growth of recovery. But if your loved one isn't comfortable sharing all the details, respect their wishes. Having a plan can be helpful for both of you.

2. Help Them Map Out a Support System

Staying sober during the holidays can be more challenging for your loved one if they are out of their normal environment. Make sure they continue going to support group meetings and help them map out their support system. Your loved one's holiday schedule should include time for: Support groups and meetings, time set aside for daily exercise, time to talk with their sponsor, and a quiet place for them to unwind and relax

3. Help Your Loved One Set Boundaries

The holidays are all about family and friends coming together to spend time with each other. While the essence of the holidays is to be grateful for these relationships, don't be afraid to remind your loved one that their recovery comes first. How can you help your loved one with the stress of trying to spend time with everyone who reaches out? Help them set up an open house. Having people come to your loved one makes things much easier to manage. It also has the benefit of cutting down on any guilt or stress your loved one might feel from not being able to see everyone. This all relates back to boundaries. Helping your loved one determine what their limits are can help ease holiday stress and lower their risk of relapse.

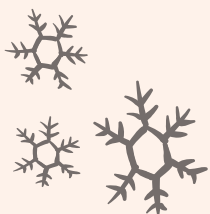
4. Volunteer with Your Loved One

The holidays offer plenty of opportunities to give back. Did you know that helping others can actually have a positive impact on your loved one's recovery? From serving a meal at a homeless shelter to helping organize a toy drive, there's plenty of ways to express your gratitude this year. Talk with your loved one and see if they're interested in volunteering with you. Having someone to volunteer with can be the difference. Oftentimes, one of the main goals of recovery is to build self-worth. By helping your loved one contribute to something bigger than themselves, they can find an empowering sense of purpose and fulfillment. (Silvermaplerecovery.com)

The principle of the sail (drugfree.org)

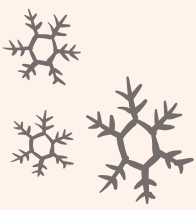
In sailing, the seasoned mariner knows that no matter how exact he is in his rigging and tacking and moving all of the parts of the boat, he cannot control the wind. Knowing what we can and cannot control, and then practicing the art of accepting that which I cannot, is paramount in keeping sane during these times.

At the end of the day, no matter what you do, you cannot control your loved one's recovery. That is the wind to you. You can let go of that outcome. You must let go of that if you are to find peace. This is incredibly difficult to do alone. No matter how smart or strong you are, getting support from others who understand what you are going through is critical. Participation in groups like Al-Anon, Families Anonymous and other support groups for people who have family members struggling with substance use should be as important as getting gifts ready for the season.



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kids, please click
here





Resources for Families Coping with Mental and Substance Use Disorders

Every family is unique, but all families share a bond that can be used to support one another during trying times.

- While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for helping a family member who is drinking too much, using drugs, or dealing with a mental illness, research shows that family support can play a major role in helping a loved one with mental and substance use disorders.
- When a family member is experiencing a mental or substance use disorder, it can affect more than just the person in need of recovery. Evidence has shown that some people have a genetic predisposition for developing mental and substance use disorders, and may be at greater risk based on environmental factors such as having grown up in a home affected by a family member's mental health or history of substance use. Families should be open to the options of support groups or family therapy and counseling, which can improve treatment effectiveness by supporting the whole family.
- It is also important to remember that the unique challenges that come from helping a loved one with a mental or substance use disorder can be taxing, so caregivers should take steps to prioritize their own health as well.
- Family members may be more likely to notice when their loved ones are experiencing changes in mood or behavior. Being able to offer support, family members can connect those in need with treatment, resources, and services to begin and stay on their recovery journey.



Tips for Celebrating the Holidays with Recovering Family Members and Friends

Celebrate the Holidays Safely, Comfortably, Joyously

Peter Gaumond, Chief, ONDCP Recovery Branch

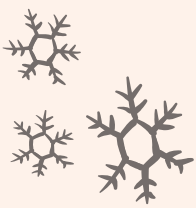
This time each year can be stressful for anyone, but the holidays present a special challenge for people recovering from an addiction. Those in long-term recovery typically are adept at navigating the minefield of temptation at holiday social gatherings. But many of those in their first year of recovery, their friends, and family members wonder how best to celebrate the holidays safely, comfortably, and joyously.

If your festivities will include someone with a year or more in recovery, you may simply want to ask if there is anything you can do to make the holiday better for them. They may want to bring a friend who's also in recovery. They may have beverage preferences or want the flexibility to step out for a short while, either to attend a mutual aid meeting (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or **SMART Recovery**), make a call, or get some fresh air.

The holidays may come with expectations, such as shopping, travel, cooking, and multiple social gatherings. People in early recovery are often experiencing difficult personal or financial circumstances while at the same time trying to learn to live without the substance that had become central to their lives. While the holidays are a time to celebrate family and good cheer, they are also a time when other feelings can be heightened. Such feelings can include a sense of loss about a deceased family member, or feelings of hurt, resentment, anger, shame, or guilt about the past on the part of the recovering person, other family members, or both.

Early recovery brings reawakened awareness of the harm one caused oneself and one's family and friends during the course of the addiction. It is also a time when the brain and body are still actively recovering from the effects of addiction. Those in early recovery are relatively new at learning to experience, process, and manage feelings and to function in social situations without the use of a substance. Alcohol or other drugs may have served the recovering person as a social lubricant during the early stages of their use, helping alleviate social anxiety and feelings of not fitting in while simultaneously lifting their guard, making it easier to speak and act spontaneously. The social events of the holidays can be challenging in a number of ways for the individual who is new to recovery.

Fortunately, many in early recovery do well during the holidays. The experience of sharing the holidays with family or friends can strengthen their recovery and reinforce the value of the fuller, more authentic way of life they are entering. The holidays can, in effect, be a time to reconnect and restore. To help foster a positive holiday environment for those in recovery, please keep in mind the following tips:



Tips for celebrating the holidays with family or friends in early recovery:

1. **You are not responsible for your guest's recovery, even if that guest is your child, sibling, or parent.**

Behind the scenes orchestration to “help” the recovering person through the event can sometimes be unhelpful. Instead, reach out to him or her to see if there's anything you can do to help the event go smoothly. If you do, be ready and willing to accept “No, thank you” as the answer.

2. **Ask yourself if you and your family are ready to celebrate the holiday with the recovering person.** Are there unresolved hurts or resentments that could make the holiday difficult for all? Does your family understand addiction and embrace recovery or is the topic shrouded in shame, an “elephant in the room”? Addiction affects not only the addicted individual but the family as a whole. Denial or shame around addiction, if not appropriately addressed, can make the holiday difficult for the family and risky for the recovering person. So, it's worth asking: *Are you and your family ready?*

3. **Ask your friend or family member if they are comfortable taking part in the celebration this year.** Make sure they understand that it is perfectly OK to miss the celebration if that is what is best for their recovery. Their recovery comes first. It's better to miss them this time around in order to increase the likelihood that they will be alive, well, and able to participate in future events. Think of it as an investment that will pay dividends.

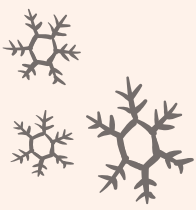
4. **If you will be serving alcohol, check to see if your invitee is comfortable with that.** Note, even if you're willing to host an alcohol-free holiday event, your family member or friend might not be comfortable attending if alcohol is not served simply because he or she is present.

5. **Ask if they'd like to invite someone or invite others who do not drink.** Regardless of whether alcohol is served or not, the recovering person may want to invite a recovering guest. If you're serving alcohol and have family members or friends who are in recovery or who do not drink, you may want to ask your guest if he or she would like you to invite them so that there will be other non-drinkers with whom to socialize.

6. **Ask what kinds of beverages they would like to have.** While non-alcoholic “mocktails” may seem like a good idea—and many in recovery do enjoy them—they may actually be a trigger for some people in early recovery, either because they visually remind the guest of cocktails or because they remind the individual that he or she can no longer drink. Despite all the pain and aggravation that alcohol and drugs may have caused the recovering individual, giving them up can result in a powerful sense of loss. Beverages such as hot spiced cider, hot cocoa, iced or hot tea or coffee are often welcomed. Some people in long-term recovery drink so-called “non-alcoholic” beer and wine. If this works for them, it is of course perfectly acceptable. It should be noted, though, that these beverages generally do include small amounts of alcohol. For people in the early stages of recovery from alcohol addiction, these beverages should be avoided.

7. **Provide time and space to step away from the group, if needed.** Being able to take a walk, relax in a quiet room, step away to connect by telephone with another person in recovery, attend a mutual aid meeting, or gracefully depart early can be very important to a person in early recovery.

8. **Listen to them.** If they don't want any special steps taken to accommodate them, and both you and they are comfortable with them taking part this time, then simply go ahead.



Preparing For The Holidays



- Know your spending limit. Lack of money is one of the biggest causes of stress during the holiday season. This year, set a budget, and don't spend more than you've planned. It's okay to tell your child that a certain toy costs too much. Don't buy gifts that you'll spend the rest of the year trying to pay off.
- Give something personal. You can show love and caring with any gift that is meaningful and personal. It doesn't have to cost a lot. Or use words instead of an expensive gift to let people know how important they are to you. Make a phone call or write a note and share your feelings.
- Get organized. Make lists or use an appointment book to keep track of tasks to do and events to attend.
- Share the tasks. You don't have to do everything yourself. Share your "to do" list with others. Spend time with friends and family while you share tasks like decorating, wrapping gifts, and preparing the holiday meal.
- Learn to say no. It's okay to say "no" to events that aren't important to you. This will give you more time to say "yes" to events that you do want to attend.
- Be realistic. Try not to put pressure on yourself to create the perfect holiday for your family. Focus instead on the traditions that make holidays special for you. And remember that just because it's a holiday, family problems don't go away. If you have a hard time being around your relatives, it's okay to set limits on your time at events and visits.

9 tips to fend off holiday stress

The holidays are a time for family and cheer, but making sure the house is clean, the food is ready, and the presents are wrapped and ready to be opened can be overwhelming. These factors can bring unwanted stress and depression in a time meant for happiness.

Some important, practical tips can help minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. These tips may even help you enjoy the holidays more than expected.

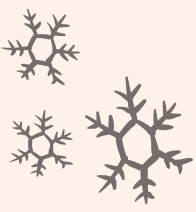
Through the endless parties, cooking, shopping and cleaning, try taking one of 9 steps to ensure you have a stress-free holiday:

1. Plan ahead.

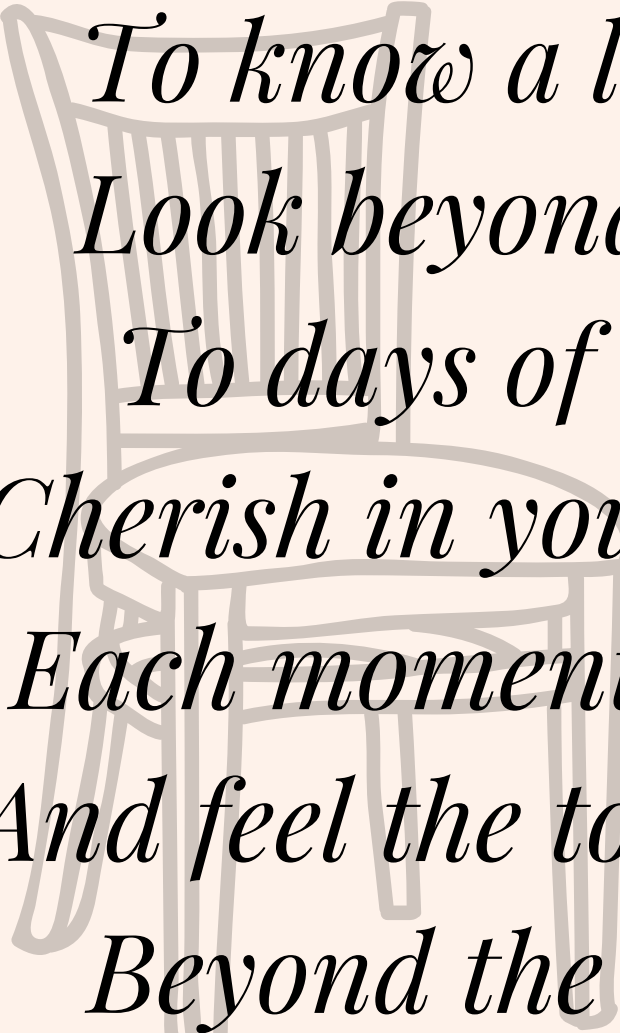
Between co-workers, friends and family, it's inevitable that some commitments will end up on the same day. Make sure to plan on what you can attend in person or virtually. If you're hosting the holidays, create a menu to help you stay organized and make grocery shopping easier.

MORE

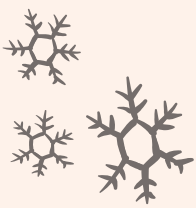




Beyond The Empty Chair



*Look beyond the empty chair
To know a life well spent
Look beyond the solitude
To days of true content
Cherish in your broken heart
Each moment gladly shared
And feel the touch of memory
Beyond the empty chair.*



Managed Self Care

If the winter months bring with them the winter "blues" you may need to practice a little managed care for self.

Maybe its the changing weather, less sun light, end of the year reports, kids back in school or a combination of the above or more, this time of year can be an emotional low for a lot of people.

If you are one of those people who could use a personal lift but don't have the time or resources to run away to a tropical island for five or six months you may need to institute your own personal managed care plan. Here are some tips:

- Stay active, exercise can help keep stress under control
- Watch your diet, eat smart.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Be prepared for winter weather conditions. Make sure your car is ready for the changing weather.
- Recognize when you're depressed. Talk to someone you trust.
- Reward yourself. Treat yourself as you would treat your best friend.
- Keep a positive attitude. Remember you can only live life one day at a time.

Resources

Al-Anon Family Groups

[CLICK HERE](#)

Nar-Anon Family Groups

[CLICK HERE](#)

Let's Get Real Inc.

[CLICK HERE](#)

ME WE Family Education
& Support Group

[CLICK HERE](#)



My Recovery Day

[CLICK HERE](#)

United Way
First Call For Help
211

[CLICK HERE](#)

Social Media Addiction Statistics



- On average, people spend 2-3 hours of their time on social media a day.
- This is equal to almost five years of a person's whole life span.
- Recent studies show that more than 210 million people are affected by social media addiction.
- 60% of people in the world have a phone
- YouTube is the most used platform amongst teenagers
- The average number of social media accounts per user is 8.4
- Most social media platforms are for ages 13 and older
- 22% of teens say they feel an emotional response to negative online feedback
- 59% of teens are subjected to cyberbullying

[MORE](#)

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom
to know the difference