

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



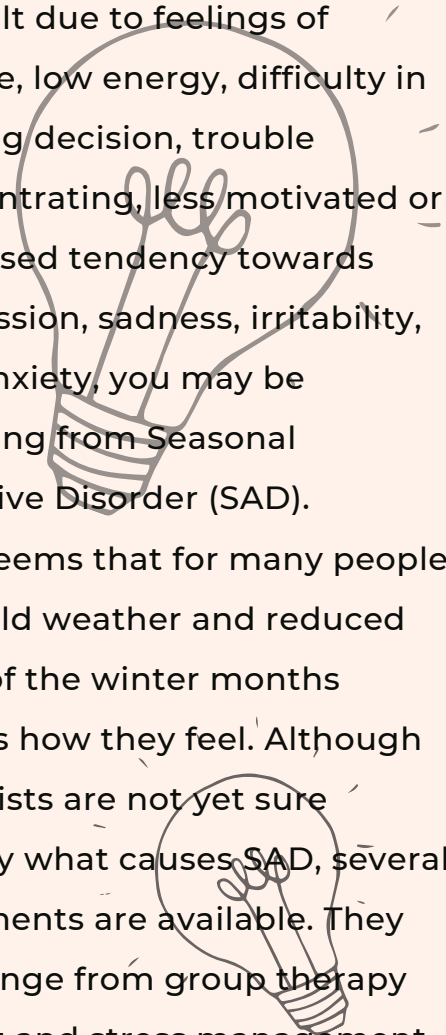
THE ME WE
FAMILY
EDUCATION &
SUPPORT GROUP

"MAKING A DIFFERENCE,
NOW THAT YOU KNOW"



Light Up To Ward Off Wintertime Blues

- If you're one of those folks who finds the winter months difficult due to feelings of fatigue, low energy, difficulty in making decision, trouble concentrating, less motivated or increased tendency towards depression, sadness, irritability, and anxiety, you may be suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).
- It seems that for many people the cold weather and reduced light of the winter months effects how they feel. Although scientists are not yet sure exactly what causes SAD, several treatments are available. They can range from group therapy to diet and stress management. The most effective treatment,

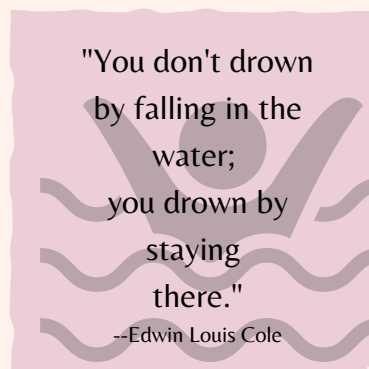


say researchers, is light therapy.

Seventy-five percent to eighty-five percent of SAD cases experience improvement from exposure to varying amounts of bright light. Depending on the sensitivity of the individual, the light source can be as bright as 2,500 lux, which is about as bright as a sunny day in the spring.

If you find that the winter months get you down, try lighting up! This could be the brightest idea you've heard today.

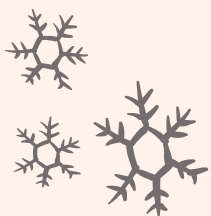
Reminders....



It's not your fault!

It's not your fight!

It's not your fix!



Let's Drink To Your Health!



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

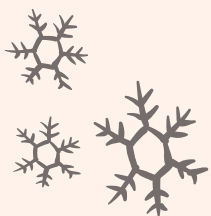
- Water is part of your body's cooling system
- Water is "pure", in that it has no calories, sugar, stimulants, depressants, or chemical additives. It's an ideal diet aid, filling your stomach without adverse effects.
- Water protects your skin. It can help ward off wrinkles by promoting skin elasticity.
- 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.

Winter Wonderland

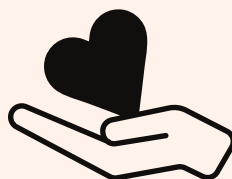
W	I	C	G	N	I	T	A	K	S	T	R	Z	D
N	D	N	A	L	R	E	D	N	O	W	D	C	L
W	O	N	R	A	R	O	R	K	A	W	O	Z	L
S	B	T	S	S	N	O	W	F	L	A	K	E	L
K	D	R	N	I	I	C	I	C	L	E	L	N	N
I	L	N	O	L	L	O	W	Y	T	S	O	R	F
I	N	T	W	L	F	L	C	S	L	S	P	N	S
N	S	R	B	A	R	L	A	N	L	L	G	I	N
G	L	E	A	F	O	T	L	N	I	P	P	Y	S
N	K	T	L	W	Z	S	L	E	D	D	I	N	G
A	S	N	L	O	E	L	G	L	I	S	T	E	N
D	D	I	W	N	N	Z	N	A	D	L	O	C	T
S	O	W	E	S	D	R	A	Z	Z	I	L	B	O
W	H	O	T	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	I

NIPPY
SNOWBALL
HOT CHOCOLATE
SNOWFLAKE
FROSTY
ICICLE
SKATING
WONDERLAND
SLEDDING
FROZEN
BLIZZARD
SKIING
SNOWFALL
GLISTEN
WINTER





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.

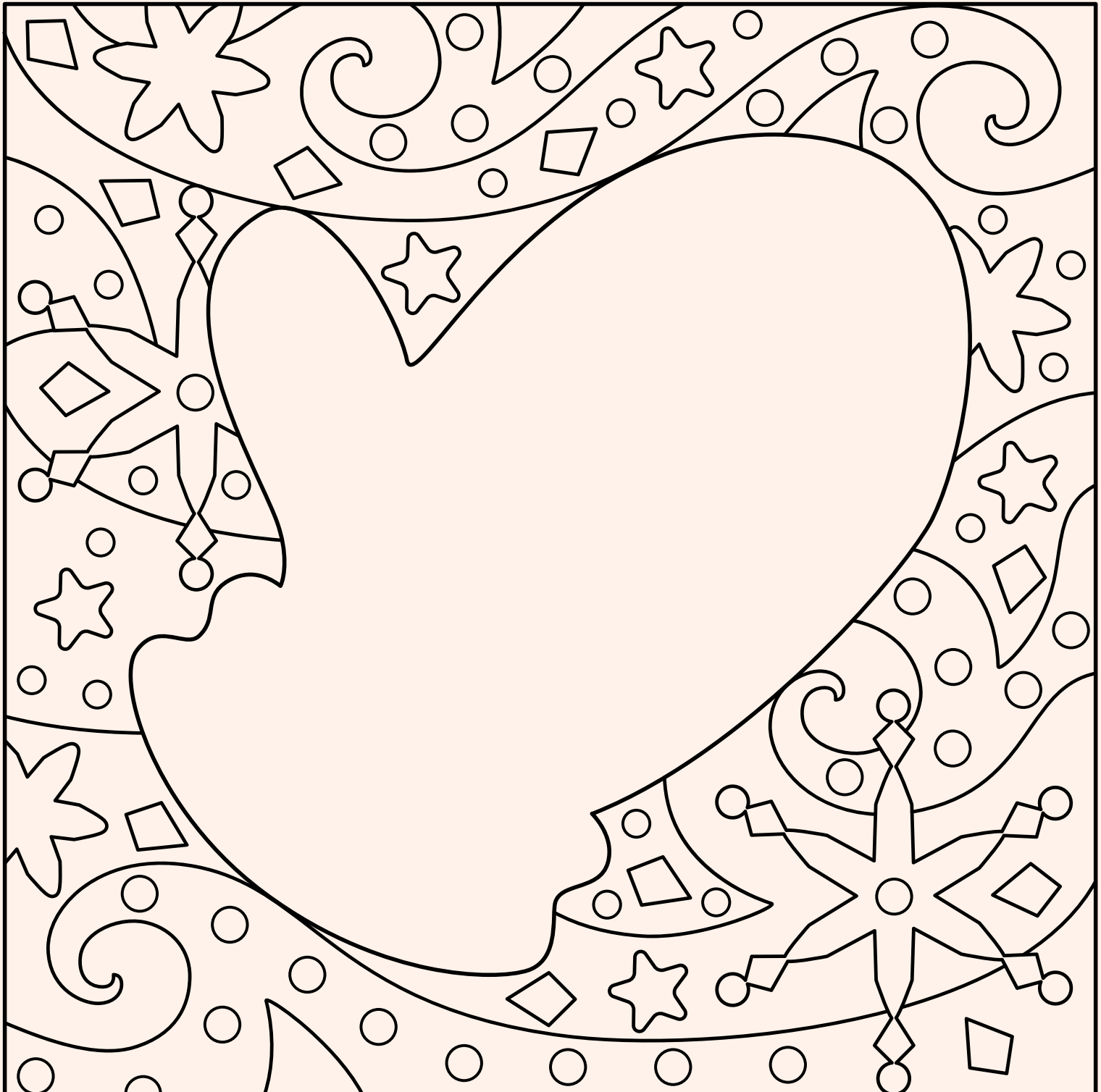
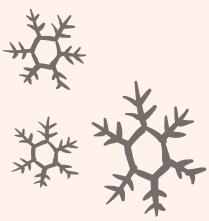
4. Volunteer with Your Loved One

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)

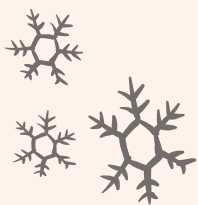
In sailing, the seasoned mariner knows that no matter how exact he is in his rigging and tacking and moving all of the parts of the boat, he cannot control the wind. Knowing what we can and cannot control, and then practicing the art of accepting that which I cannot, is paramount in keeping sane during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



For more free
coloring pages for the
kids, please click
here





Safer Ways To Celebrate The Holidays



Safer Ways to Celebrate Holidays

Holiday traditions are important for families and children. There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and protect your health. Because many generations tend to gather to celebrate holidays, the best way to minimize COVID-19 risk and keep your family and friends safer is to get vaccinated if you're eligible.

Here are safer ways to celebrate the holidays:

Generally:

- Protect those not yet eligible for vaccination such as young children by getting yourself and other eligible people around them vaccinated.
- Wear well-fitting masks over your nose and mouth if you are in public indoor settings if you are not fully vaccinated.
 - Even those who are fully vaccinated should wear a mask in public indoor settings in communities with substantial to high transmission.
 - Outdoors is safer than indoors.
 - Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated spaces.
 - If you are sick or have symptoms, don't host or attend a gathering.
 - Get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have a close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

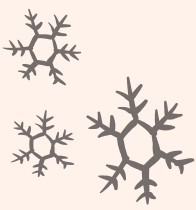
If you are considering traveling for a holiday or event, visit CDC's Travel page to help you decide what is best for you and your family. CDC still recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated.

- If you are not fully vaccinated and must travel, follow CDC's domestic travel or international travel recommendations for unvaccinated people.
- If you will be traveling in a group or family with unvaccinated people, choose safer travel options.
- Everyone, even people who are fully vaccinated, is required to wear a mask on public transportation and follow international travel recommendations.

Special considerations:

- People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated and have received an additional dose. They should continue to take all precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask, until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
- You might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission if a member of your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated.
- If you are gathering with a group of people from multiple households and potentially from different parts of the country, you could consider additional precautions (e.g., avoiding crowded indoor spaces before travel, taking a test) in advance of gathering to further reduce risk.
- Do NOT put a mask on children younger than 2 years old.

By working together, we can enjoy safer holidays, travel, and protect our own health as well as the health of our family and friends.



Tips for Celebrating the Holidays with Recovering Family Members and Friends

Celebrate the Holidays Safely, Comfortably, Joyously

Peter Gaumond, Chief, ONDCP Recovery Branch

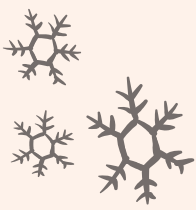
This time each year can be stressful for anyone, but the holidays present a special challenge for people recovering from an addiction. Those in long-term recovery typically are adept at navigating the minefield of temptation at holiday social gatherings. But many of those in their first year of recovery, 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.

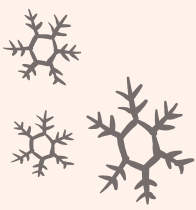
Early recovery brings reawakened awareness of the harm one caused oneself and one's family and friends during the course of the addiction. It is also a time when the brain and body are still actively recovering from the effects of addiction. Those in early recovery are relatively new at learning to experience, 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

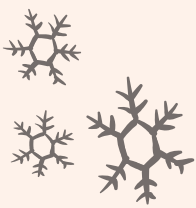


- Know your spending limit. Lack of money is one of the biggest causes of stress during the holiday season. This year, set a budget, and don't spend more than you've planned. It's okay to tell your child that a certain toy costs too much. Don't buy gifts that you'll spend the rest of the year trying 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.

Dealing With Stress During the Holiday

You may not be able to avoid stressful situations during the holidays. But you can plan to respond to them in a healthy way.

- Take breaks from group activities. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Spend a little time by yourself if you can. Meditate, or do some relaxation breathing. Go for a short walk.
- Keep a regular sleep, meal, and exercise schedule. Limit your alcohol. Taking care of yourself will help you deal with stressful situations during the holidays.
- Get support if you need it. Holidays can sometimes trigger depression. They can be especially hard if you are already dealing with the death of a loved one or the breakup of a relationship. You may feel embarrassed to ask for help, or you may think that you'll get over "the blues" on your own. But most people need treatment to get better. Talk with your doctor about counselling



Helping children deal with the holidays and COVID



4-6 years old:

Create new, quarantine-approved holiday traditions.

- Establish traditions within your immediate family – make holiday decorations, make a home-made gift, cook a special meal.
- Instead of in-person visits with friends, family or even Santa, consider fun ways to have a video interaction, write letters or make cards.
- Don't punish children for having a negative reaction to holiday changes this year. Tell them that it's okay to feel sad, disappointed or angry.

Find the positive and teach positive self-talk. For example, "Since we don't have to travel, we get extra time to relax and play at home."

6-12 years old:

Help your child cope with holiday blues – and build resilience for the future.



- At this age, children understand the precautions that need to be taken due to COVID-19.
- Validate their feelings of disappointment and sadness about changes to their holiday traditions: It's normal and OK to feel angry, frustrated or sad.
- Remember that helping children overcome disappointment helps them build resiliency.
- Ask them for their ideas about how to make the holiday special.
- Teach fun relaxation strategies – try yoga for the first time, or practice slowly breathing in and out the scent of a favorite treat, lotion or candle.

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

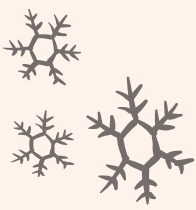
Each moment gladly shared

And feel the touch of memory

Beyond the empty chair.



---- unknown



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

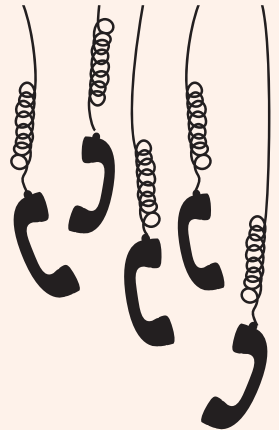
[CLICK HERE](#)

Let's Get Real Inc.

[CLICK HERE](#)

ME WE Family Education
& Support Group

[CLICK HERE](#)



United Way
First Call
For Help
211

[CLICK HERE](#)

Hooked?



Caffeine - It's the most widely used mood altering drug in the world and is ingested by about 80% to 90% of Americans, primarily through soda and coffee. A daily brewed cup of joe with 100 mg of caffeine, can lead to mild physical dependence. Withdrawal symptoms are experienced by about half of those trying to quit.

Tobacco - There are about 50.6 million users of tobacco products in the U.S. About 15.3% of men and 12.7% of women are cigarette smokers, with cigarette use lowest in Western states and highest in the Midwest; while youth are smoking fewer cigarettes, 21% of high school students are now vaping.

Time Magazine: The Science of Addiction 2019

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*