




GUIDE to
**Navigating the
Holiday Season**
with Care and Resilience

As we approach the holiday season it's natural for emotions to run high, whether it's the cheerful anticipation, the stress of preparations, or the challenges of balancing it all. Keep in mind, there is no right way to spend the holidays!



Here are **mental, physical, financial,** and **relationship** tips to guide you through the season with mindfulness and strength.



MENTAL

You don't need to be perfect. Embrace self-compassion and practice mindfulness to stay present. Focus on genuine moments of connection and joy. Prioritize well-being over the pursuit of making every detail magical and perfect.

Set realistic expectations. Manage stress by setting achievable goals and not overscheduling. Prioritize what truly matters. Allow yourself to say 'no' when necessary and remember that it's perfectly fine to delegate tasks or seek help from others when feeling overwhelmed.

Find you time. Prioritize self-care activities that help you de-stress and recharge, like spending time alone, enjoying fresh air, reading, or listening to music. Ensure you give these activities the same importance as your other obligations to combat social exhaustion.

Cultivate gratitude. By reflecting on positive aspects of your life, you can shift your focus from anxiety to appreciation.

LONELY? STRESSED? DEPRESSED?

The holiday season, with its emphasis on togetherness and celebration, can be a time of heightened emotions. Those grappling with loneliness may feel isolated and their sense of belonging magnified. For those battling depression, the pressure to appear joyful can intensify their internal struggles.

These feelings are valid and not uncommon.

Seeking support from friends, family, or professionals, and practicing self-compassion can provide solace during this time.

When supporting others, strive to create a holiday season that's not just about merriment, but also about empathy, understanding, and embracing the full range of human emotions.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

- A loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness
- Isolation from others
- A persistent low mood
- Irritability
- Difficulty caring for your hygiene needs
- Apathy or numbness
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appetite



PHYSICAL

Stay active. Maintain your physical well-being through regular exercise, even if it's just a short walk. Time outdoors and in nature helps to reduce stress.

Focus on mindful nutrition. Balance festive indulgence with healthy eating to keep your energy levels stable. [View the Nutrition & Mindfulness Guide.](#)

Prioritize quality sleep. A well-rested mind is better equipped to handle stress. [Here are tips to improve sleep quality.](#)





FINANCIAL

Beware of the binge. Set a realistic budget for holiday expenses and stick to it. Prepare your shopping list to avoid overspending.

Avoid the shopping momentum effect. Everything from display placement to lighting and music is designed to trigger impulse purchases. You're more likely to keep spending once you've gotten started. You can counteract the 'shopping momentum effect' by sticking to your list and leaving the store when overly tempted.

Consider experiences. Whether it is time together, attending an event, visiting a museum or something else, gifting an experience is a great way to create memories.

Seek assistance. If financial stress becomes overwhelming, consult a financial advisor or counselor. Your Perspectives Assistance Program is here to help.



THINK OUT OF THE (GIFT) BOX

DIY. Make your own holiday decorations using materials you already have at home or natural elements like pinecones, branches, or dried flowers.

Budget-Friendly Traditions. Instead of expensive outings, enjoy activities like watching holiday movies, decorating cookies, or taking a winter walk.

Potluck Dinners. If you usually host holiday gatherings, consider making them potluck-style, with each guest bringing a dish. This spreads the cost and adds variety to the meal.

Secondhand Shopping. Explore thrift stores or online marketplaces for holiday attire or decorations. You can find unique items at a fraction of the cost.

Community Events. Look for free or low-cost local holiday events or activities, such as tree lighting ceremonies, parades, or community concerts.



RELATIONSHIPS

Communicate openly and honestly with loved ones about your needs and feelings.

Set clear boundaries to protect your well-being during social events and gatherings.

Prioritize quality time with loved ones, focusing on connections rather than obligations.

Family dynamics. It's complicated!

*** See the next page for a step-by-step script to help you manage family expectations around the holidays.*

**We're here
for you.**

**If you find yourself struggling with holiday stress or
any emotional challenges, reach out.**

Your Assistance Program (EAP/MAP/SAP) is here to support you. We provide no cost confidential counseling and resources to help you through tough seasons.

24/7 call or text **800.456.6327**

Visit **[perspectivesltd.com/login](https://www.perspectivesltd.com/login)**

Steps to Manage Family Expectations & Protect Your Peace During the Holidays

1 CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE.

Ideally, it should be a quiet and relaxed setting where everyone can sit down and focus without distractions.

2 EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS HONESTLY.

Begin the conversation by sharing your feelings directly. For example, you might say, "I wanted to talk to you all about something that's been on my mind regarding the holiday season."

3 CLARIFY YOUR INTENTIONS.

Clearly state your intentions for the conversation. Explain that you want to ensure a peaceful and enjoyable holiday season for everyone.

4 SHARE YOUR BOUNDARIES.

Politely but firmly communicate the boundaries you'd like to establish to protect your peace during the holidays. Be specific. For instance, "I'd appreciate it if we could all agree to keep discussions about certain topics, like politics or personal matters, off the table during family gatherings."

5 EXPLAIN WHY IT MATTERS.

Share why these boundaries are important to you. Use "I" statements to express your feelings and concerns. For example, "I've found that discussing certain topics can lead to tension and stress for me, and I want our time together to be enjoyable for everyone."

6 INVITE FEEDBACK.

Open the floor for discussion and feedback. Encourage family members to share their thoughts and concerns as well. Be open to compromises or alternative suggestions.

7 SET MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS.

Work together to establish mutual expectations for the holiday season. This might include agreeing on specific topics to avoid, setting a schedule for family gatherings, or discussing how conflicts will be handled if they arise.

8 THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING.

Wrap up the conversation by expressing gratitude for everyone's understanding and willingness to work together. Reiterate your desire for a peaceful and joyful holiday season.

9 FOLLOW UP.

After the initial conversation, be sure to follow up with family members as the holiday season approaches. Remind them of the agreed-upon boundaries and expectations and continue to communicate openly if any issues arise.

10 ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS!

With clear expectations and open communication, you can look forward to a holiday season that's more peaceful and enjoyable for everyone involved.