

Coping with Holiday Stress, Depression and Anxiety

Matthew: 11:28-30 *Come to me and I will refresh you.*

Jesus said to the crowds: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

The holiday season is full of celebrations, spending time with family, shopping, etc. Holidays are meant to be joyful, but for some they bring about unwelcome stress, depression and anxiety. Here are some tips to help you survive the holidays!

1. **Recognize feelings of sadness or grief and express those feelings.** The loss of a loved one or not being able to spend time with loved ones can be difficult. It is okay to feel sad and express your emotions during this difficult time.
2. **Seek community when feeling isolated or lonely.** Church and other community events can provide a social connection. It is a great time to volunteer your time to lift your spirits, help others and make friends.
3. **Be flexible, realistic and don't expect perfection.** Traditions and rituals are an important part of the holidays, however each year will be different and it is important to be open to new ideas and change.
4. **Be accepting of others.** Not everyone will agree all the time or meet your expectations. It is probably best to deal with disagreements at another time. Remember that others may feel holiday related stress too.
5. **Set a budget and stick to it.** Gift giving and entertaining can be costly. Suggest a gift exchange rather than buying individual gifts. Potlucks are a great way to share entertaining costs and try new recipes.
6. **Plan ahead.** Set aside days for shopping, baking and other activities. Plan menus and shopping lists to minimize last minute trips to the store. Also, give yourself extra time for traffic and long check out lines.
7. **Learn to say no.** It is easy to over extend, but it only adds to the stress. Your time is valuable. Decide what matters most to you and budget your time accordingly.
8. **Be healthy.** Allow time for sleep and exercise. Don't overindulge. Continue to eat regular, healthy meals, drink plenty of water and enjoy holiday treats in moderation.
9. **Take a time out.** Take time out of each day to pray, meditate, deep breath and center your soul.
10. **Seek professional help if you need it.** If you find yourself unable to shake feelings of sadness or anxiety, sleeplessness, irritability, hopelessness, are unable to complete daily tasks, or are having other physical symptoms please speak to your health care provider. It is okay to ask for help.

Sources: <http://www.usccb.org> <http://www.catholicpio.com> <http://www.psychologytoday.com> <http://www.mayoclinic.com>

Brought to you by Faith Community Nursing Ministry: Mary Muller, RN; Schannon Shawe, RN; Helen Wetzel, RN

Prayer for Anxiety and Stress:

Dear Lord,

I need you now because I am full of stress and anxiety. Reading your Word brings comfort, as I ask you to come and take my heavy burdens. I take each burden, one by one, and lay them at your feet. Please carry them for me so that I don't have to. Replace them with your humble and gentle yoke so that I will find rest for my soul today. I receive your gift of peace of mind and heart. Thank you that I can lie down tonight in peace and sleep. I know that you, Lord, will keep me safe. I am not afraid because you are always with me. Please keep me daily, Lord, in your perfect peace.

Amen