



Bringing Out Your Best During the Holidays

NOVEMBER 2016

FEATURED ARTICLE: How to Truly Enjoy the Holidays

Stores are streaming holiday music, festive displays decorate shopping centers, and your favorite coffee shops are selling their peppermint mocha delights. You want to be joyful and take it all in, but does the stress brought on by the holidays overpower you? Let's concentrate on some tips to help you put your joy back into the holidays.

TAKE A BREATH AND FOCUS

Breathe in, breathe out. When your holiday stress starts to build like a heavily shaken soda can, and you think you are about to explode, pause- take a deep breath, and focus. Concentrate on the true meaning of the holiday and what you would love to experience this holiday. **Simplify.** Most of us aren't the "Martha Stewart type," and may actually hover closer towards being "Clark Griswold" in Christmas Vacation. That is okay. If you are participating in holiday events, pick something you want to partake in and will enjoy. Don't commit to a cookie exchange if the stress of planning, shopping for, and cooking doesn't outweigh the actual happiness you would receive from the event. Or, if you just aren't that comfortable in the kitchen, buy a yummy delight from a bakery and google the recipe to share!

Make your list and check it twice. *Prioritize tasks, be flexible in the events and tasks you commit to, politely say "No" to some projects and occasions, and ensure you don't overbook yourself.* If you are the one who completes all the holiday cards, all the shopping, all of the wrapping, all of the cooking, all of the decorating, all of the planning, all of the inviting, all of the coordinating, all of the cleaning - whew, just listing everything is exhausting - then it's time to set some boundaries. Recruit a support team, aka "elves" and together complete the tasks you need to do. Try to make the tasks fun with some music and laughter so your "elves" will voluntarily sign up for next year.

FREE WEBINAR:

Managing Holiday Madness

Tuesday, November 15th

[12-1pm](#) and [3-4pm](#) EST

[11-12pm](#) and [2-3pm](#) CST

[10-11am](#) and [1-2pm](#) MST

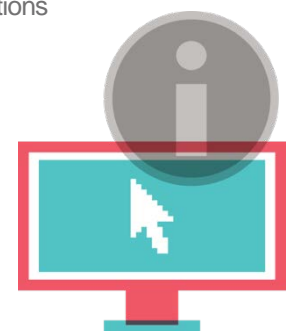
[9-10am](#) and [12-1pm](#) PST

While many of us find comfort in our holiday rituals, there are aspects of the holiday season that leave us feeling less than festive. Coping with these feelings requires some introspection and planning. In this webinar, you will come to better understand your holiday stressors and acquire stress management tools to help you embrace the holidays rather than dread them.

TO REGISTER: Click on the time you would like to attend above.

Or log on to www.HelloE4.com with your username and password. Click on "**UPCOMING WEBINARS**" on the homepage and follow the easy instructions

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TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

With the increased stress and pressures of this time of year, it is important for you to take care of yourself. This definitely isn't the time of the year to put your exercise and good eating habits on hiatus. Enjoy in some special holiday treats, but don't overindulge. Stay hydrated. Make sure you are drinking plenty of water. Also, try to get adequate sleep and personal downtime. Our bodies need this time to recover and reset for the next day. Laugh! Did you know that laughter causes our bodies to release endorphins (our internal "happy" chemical)? Laughter not only brings us joy and a sense of wellbeing, it also increases our immune system by stimulating it to produce more ninja-like infection fighting cells, and laughter also decreases our stress hormones.

Do something nice for yourself. If this is your most stressful time of the year, reward yourself this holiday season. Doing something nice for yourself can reap huge positive benefits for yourself (and others if you become happier!). Schedule a massage, hire someone to clean your house before your holiday party, or just give yourself a night off resting at home watching your favorite movie.

TAKE THE TIME TO MAKE YOUR JOY

For many individuals, holidays are stressful because they are missing a loved one. That emptiness can be overwhelming. If you are experiencing this incorporate your loved ones memory into your celebration somehow. Write a letter honoring them and read it at your family gathering. Display their pictures proudly near your decorations. Or, if a loved one is experiencing such sadness be cognizant of their feelings this holiday season and offer support.

One way to shift sorrow to happiness this time of year is to view holidays through the eyes of a child. Imagine their sense of wonder and amazement as they approach this season. Remember your most cherished holiday memories and share them with loved ones. Additionally, *this is a great time of year to "pay it forward" with a random act of kindness.* Pay for the person's meal or coffee behind you in the drive-through line. Either individually or as a part of a group, adopt a child or family in need (you can do this through numerous organizations). Shop for that child or family and imagine their delight upon receiving your gifts. Or just donate your time. Many shelters and hospitals need volunteers to help them care for others and deliver joy this holiday season. *The best way to ease your holiday stress is to switch your focus from yourself to that of someone else.*

SOURCES: https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/wellness/10-ways-to-beat-holiday-stress-with-fitness-and-nutrition/2015/12/14/d2de44c0-9dec-11e5-8728-1af6af208198_story.html,
<http://www.beliefnet.com/Wellness/Health/Emotional-Health/Stress/Holiday-Stress-Busters.aspx>,
<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm>

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THIS MONTH, LET US BE YOUR RESOURCE FOR:

- Counseling to help manage holiday stress as well as the effects of seasonal affective disorder (SAD)
- Online learning via our webinar, "Managing Holiday Madness" on Tuesday, November 15th
- 30-minute consultation with a financial specialist to help manage holiday expense issues
- Access to money-saving discounts at the Savings Center
- Resources and referrals to help with travel planning, party planning, catering, house cleaning, and more

**ALWAYS AVAILABLE
ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL**

For whatever work or life issue is on your mind, or for anything related to daily living that you could use some extra help with, let us be your resource. It's free, it's confidential, and it's available to you, as well as your family and household members. Just call or log on to get started.

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