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Education and Encouragement for a Healthier, Happier Life.

## Managing Depression & Anxiety Over the Holidays

It is not always a "loyful season" or a "merry" time. The holidays add a lot of stress on most people, resulting in increased feelings of panic, anxiety, fear and worthlessness. For those already suffering from depression and anxiety, this could result in severe changes to their health and well-being. Below are some tips to help manage these added stressors, but if they become unbearable or unmanageable, reach out for help immediately.

## Helpful Tips To Get Through the Holidays

1. **Set realistic goals, pace yourself and organize your time.** Know what you can and cannot do and remember that your commitments and activities can be spread out.
2. **Learn to say "no".** Over-scheduling yourself and not allowing some free time can lead to emotional breakdowns. Learn how to say "no" and realize that it is okay to skip a few gatherings.
3. **Acknowledge that your feelings are normal.** Always remember that the holiday season does not relinquish the feelings of sadness or loneliness. There is room for them in the holidays, just be aware of them in order to help manage them more effectively.
4. **Try not to compare previous years to the present.** Every season is different and will provide an opportunity for enjoyment in its own way.
5. **Do something for someone else.** Try volunteering your time to make a difference in someone else's life.
6. **Try activities that are free to alleviate the perceived "financial" strain.** Take a tour around town to look at holiday decorations, go window shopping or just go on a hike and enjoy nature.
7. **Minimize your alcohol intake.** Alcohol is a depressant and drinking in excess may result in amplifying the negative or sad feelings and affect your mood and overall well-being.
8. **Get plenty of rest.** Getting the right amount of sleep is important. Not only will you feel more energized, but your mind will be much more clear and able to manage thoughts of fear, panic or anxiety.
9. **Be open to starting new traditions.** Allow yourself to accept new ideas to the "perfect" holiday or gathering. Try not to get caught up in old ways, there's always room for new ways of celebrating.
10. **Reach out for support.** Experiencing the loss of a loved one, can make the holidays more difficult. Try not to isolate yourself. Spend time with your friends and family and get their support to help you through the challenging moments.
11. **Exercise regularly.** Stay on track with your daily exercise and routine. Adding a quick 30-minute walk, run, or bicycle ride will get your heart rate up and release the endorphins to help boost your mood.

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