

When the Holidays Are Stressful: Taking Care of Yourself During Breaks



The holidays can mean added pressure and stress, and this year is no exception. Spending extended time at home and with family can be difficult. Here are some tips on managing your well-being over breaks.

Mental and Emotional Well-being

- **Say 'no' to things.** It's OK to set boundaries and not engage in things you don't want to take part in or to avoid sensitive topics you don't want to discuss.
- **Stay in touch with friends and family who are supportive** (text, video call, social media, etc.). Friends and family want to hear from you, especially if you haven't been able to see each other in-person recently.
- **Be kind to yourself and others.** The holidays are about compassion, gratitude, and giving back. Take some time to be kind!
- **Take breaks from difficult family members.** Go for a walk, read in another room, or make time for yourself in whatever way is best for you.
- **Relax and enjoy!** Listen to music, read books, or watch movies and TV that you love.
- **If you feel stressed, practice healthy coping.** This could be journaling to identify how you're feeling, practicing deep breathing or meditation, or saying affirmations.
- **If you're overwhelmed,** reach out to your campus counseling center or a local mental health resource (the Crisis Text Line is available 24/7 - text HELLO to 741741).

Physical Well-being

- **Get outside or be active however you can.** Take a walk, dance in your room, play football with family or friends, etc.
- **Avoid alcohol and other drugs.** These can fuel uncomfortable conversations and overall make you not feel 100%.
- **Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.** When possible, make sure you're getting enough fruits and vegetables along with proteins and healthy carbohydrates.
- **Treat yourself-** (it's the holidays!)- but don't over-indulge. Everything in moderation!

Handling Conflict and Tough Topics

- Identify how you're feeling and why, then try to address it.
- Remain calm and try to take perspective.
- Avoid the issue if you can, otherwise you can try to accommodate or smooth out differences for the sake of peace.
- Attempt to compromise or collaborate if possible.

Resources

- **The JED Foundation:** jedfoundation.org
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness:** nami.org/Home
- **Managing Election Stress -The Jed Foundation:** jedfoundation.org/managing-election-stress
- **How to Cope with Being Home Again - Stanford News:** news.stanford.edu/2020/04/16/how-to-cope-with-being-home-again
- **Winter Break Survival Tips for College Students - Mental Health America:** mhanational.org/winter-break-survival-tips-college-students
- **Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic as a College Student - University of Michigan:** medicine.umich.edu/dept/psychiatry/michigan-psychiatry-resources-covid-19/adults-specific-resources/coping-covid-19-pandemic-college-student
- **Enjoying the Holidays Safely during COVID-19 - University of Missouri:** showme.missouri.edu/2020/mu-health-psychology-expert-shares-tips-for-safely-enjoying-the-holiday-season-during-covid-19

Apps for Mental Health

- **Calm:** calm.com
- **Happify:** happify.com
- **Headspace:** headspace.com
- **Moodfit:** getmoodfit.com
- **MoodMission:** moodmission.com
- **Sanvello:** sanvello.com
- **Shine:** theshineapp.com

Hotlines

- **SAMHSA's National Helpline:** 1-800-662-4357
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255
- **Missouri Crisis Line:** 1-888-761-4357
- **Missouri Crisis Text Line:** HAND to 839-863
- **Crisis Text Line:** HELLO to 741741

Member Schools

Columbia College | Drury University | Fontbonne University | Evangel University | Harris-Stowe State University | Jefferson College | Lincoln University | Maryville University
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Rockhurst University | Saint Louis University | Southeast Missouri State University | State Technical College of Missouri | Truman State University | University of Central Missouri
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