



HOLIDAY STRESS

RESOURCE TOOLKIT



Table of Contents

Holiday Stress

Intro	.....	3
For Everyone	.....	4
For Youth	.....	5
For Parents & Caregivers	.....	6
For Educators & Professionals	.....	7



HOLIDAY STRESS

INTRO



The holiday season is often a time of joy and celebration, but it can also be a period of significant stress for many individuals. According to the American Psychological Association, around 41% of adults say their stress levels increase during the holiday season compared to other times of the year.¹ This heightened stress can negatively impact mental health. Therefore, providing resources to manage stress and maintain positive mental health is crucial. Effective coping strategies, such as setting realistic expectations, seeking social support, and prioritizing self-care, can help individuals navigate this challenging period and enhance their overall well-being.

Major holidays during this season are often occasions for family and social gatherings, which can be joyous moments but also involve the potential for increased loneliness, interpersonal tension, conflicts, and disappointments. All these factors might lead to increased mental distress and subsequently increased help-seeking. Additionally, it's important to recognize that the belief that suicide rates increase during the year-end holiday season is often incorrect. In fact, data shows that the winter holiday months typically have some of the lowest average daily suicide rates of the year.² This misconception underscores the importance of addressing mental health proactively and accurately and providing support throughout the year. We hope this toolkit will provide the resources you need to navigate the holidays by taking good care of yourself and your mind.

¹ source: [apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/11/holiday-season-stress](https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/11/holiday-season-stress)

² source: asc.upenn.edu/news-events/news/suicides-dont-spike-around-holiday-season-americans-think-they-do

FOR EVERYONE



It's essential to take a moment to focus on your own needs during December and beyond. Managing stress levels before and during high-stress periods can help regulate your emotions and prevent negative impacts. If it ever feels overwhelming, remember to save 988 in your phone and reach out via text or call to speak with someone who can help.

SELF CARE IDEAS:

Take a walk outside

Write a love letter to yourself

Compliment someone (and yourself, too!)

Give yourself permission to say no

Create a happy playlist and a coping playlist

Forgive yourself

Take a mental health day from school, work, etc.

[FOR MORE IDEAS VISIT 988LIFELINE.ORG](https://www.988lifeline.org)

FOR URGENT SUPPORT [TEXT OR CALL 988](https://www.988lifeline.org)

FOR YOUTH



Journaling and activity worksheets can be powerful tools for improving mental health. They provide a structured way to express thoughts and feelings, helping to reduce stress and anxiety. Writing down your experiences and emotions can offer clarity and a sense of relief. To help manage the holiday season, the Pacific Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network created an activity worksheet designed to help teens navigate holiday stress, offering practical tips and activities to maintain their well-being during this busy time.

ACTION

Download the Holiday Stress Management Worksheet and use it as needed throughout the holidays.



FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



The holiday season can be overwhelming for many children, particularly those with autism, ADHD, sensory challenges, or anxiety. Here are some tips to help make the season more enjoyable for everyone. The Child Mind Institute offers practical tips for maintaining routines, managing sensory overload, and reducing stress during holiday gatherings and travel.



ACTION

This article offers 24 tips to make the holidays more kid-friendly. If you prefer watching a video over reading, click here to watch!



FOR EDUCATORS & PROFESSIONALS



According to a 2023 poll by the American Psychological Association, nearly 89% of U.S. adults report concerns about finances, gift-giving, missing loved ones, and potential family conflicts as major sources of stress during this time of year.³

- “Though the holidays may increase stress levels, they can also be an opportunity. Psychological science tells us that setting aside time to strengthen our relationships and engage in traditions can benefit our physical, mental, and emotional well-being, which can prepare us to better manage stress year-round,” said Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, APA’s chief executive officer.

ACTION

Download the Mental Health First Aid Mental Well-being Holiday Toolkit for information and resources on understanding holiday stress; setting realistic expectations; managing time and finances; coping with loneliness and grief; and more!



³ source: [apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/11/holiday-season-stress](https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/11/holiday-season-stress)



QUESTIONS? CONTACT

Porshia Hartel
Digital Media Specialist
Voices for Georgia's Children
freeyourfeels@gmail.com