

Overcoming Stress during the Christmas Season

December 2012

The holiday season is often a time to celebrate, relax and reconnect with friends and family. It is also a time when unwelcomed guests, like stress and depression, can take over. From cleaning and decorating, to last minute shopping and making dinner plans, to traffic jams and icy winter driving, it can be challenging to slow down, breathe and enjoy the holidays.

Fortunately, there are some great ways to ensure your Christmas holiday remains as it should be – a wonderful festive season.

- Plan Ahead. Making a list of things you need to do can help prepare you during the season.
- Stay on Budget. Determine how much you plan on spending to avoid overspending and dealing with the stress of financial debt. Rather than purchasing gifts for each person, try doing a Secret Santa gift exchange. It is a fun way to give presents and stay on budget.
- Be Realistic. It can be easy to get caught up in having the “perfect Christmas” season. Remember, as families change and grow, it is normal for traditions and rituals to change as well.

- Share the Workload. Consider sharing holiday meal preparations with friends and family, have a cookie exchange with friends or co-workers, or invite others over for a gift wrapping party.
- Strive for Balance. Try to establish some balance between what you do for others and what you do for yourself. Consider saying no to some requests or social activities if you begin to feel pressured.
- Reach Out. If you feel alone or isolated during the season, seek out social events and celebrate the Christmas season together or reach out to those who may live far away through a telephone call, Skype or email.
- Take Time for Yourself. Going for a walk, getting a massage, playing outside in the snow, or doing something that helps you relax and rejuvenate can help reduce stress and revive the spirit of the season.
- Be Cautious. As everyone is in a hurry, be cautious on the roads. Delays are expected during winter conditions. Be sure to slow down and take your time so that you can



stay safe and enjoy the season with your family and friends.

- Recall the Spirit of Giving. Donating to a local charity or volunteering can also help to lift your spirits, while giving back to your community and helping others. You can make a difference to others and put a smile on your face during this season.
- Get help. If you become overwhelmed this holiday season call 211 to learn about community organizations that can help or call 482-HELP (4357) for the Crisis Support Centre's 24 hour distress line.

At the end of the day, remember what is most important. Christmas is about celebrating the season together and enjoying time with your family, friends and community. This holiday, make the most of it by cherishing your loved ones and being thankful for what is important to you. Happy Holidays!