

Holiday Stress Relief

While it might be inevitable, it does not have to become unbearable! People handle stress differently but here are some tips to help cope when stress begins to overrun your Holiday Planning, Parties, and People you gather with!

1. Take a Deep Breath!

Let it out slowly. Take another deep breath, hold it for moment, let it out slowly. Repeat as necessary! When we breathe deeply, we change our focus from the past and future and become present.

2. Focus on People not Presentation!

The holidays are about the gatherings. The food and the decorations and the cleaning are all important but sometimes done is good enough. The ultimate gift is to share yourself with those who you love. May all who gather leave with the memories of the time you have shared.

3. Focus on Family not Frustrations!

Many families have disagreements. The holidays are a time to share your bonds not begin or continue with the differences. Leave those for another day.

4. Money Matters.

So often the stress of buying gifts and finding the "right" gift overtakes the importance of the gathering. It also sets us up to feel a financial pinch (or punch!) when the bills start coming. Set a budget. Make some of the gifts. If you have children, get them involved in making and creating. Another idea is to do a gift exchange where you draw a name and only get a gift for one family member vs. many!

5. Eat, Sleep and be Merry!

As cliché as it is to say, you really do need to take care of yourself. If you do not, you will not be able to take care of others. Make sure you are not skipping meals (keep a granola bar in your purse or pocket). Get plenty of sleep. It is **ok** to say **NO!** That includes **no** to parties, events; too much of anything becomes a bad thing! Ask yourself if you are having fun. If not, reassess.

6. Extras!

Have you ever had the extra guest arrive? Be prepared with a few extra gifts, wrapped and ready. They can be generic (box of your famous cookies or a gift card), specific to a girl (candle or hand lotion) or gentleman (car wash or money clip). This will allow you to focus on the people and not the problems

7. Travel Skills.

Whether you travel by plane, train or automobile, travel during the holidays can be frustrating. Lines are longer, traffic is heavier. Have extra snacks, water bottles, and activities (crossword puzzles for young and old; coloring books also for young and old; play games, etc) planned. Bring your own pillows and blankets when possible. Recognize that travel can be emotionally and physically exhausting and give each other a moment!

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