

Talking Tazewell

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The Wellness Playbook

It's amazing how quietly the holiday season seems to arrive. One moment, life feels calm and steady - and then suddenly, stores are filled with people rushing to find last minute gifts, Christmas music plays in every aisle, and bell-ringers stand by, reminding us to give to those in need.

The holidays often revolve around caring for others, but it's just as important to pause and care for yourself. Before you give your time, energy, or love to others, make sure your own cup is full. The season feels a little lighter when you do.

In this edition, we will focus on the lead up to the holidays: the emotional preparation, boundary setting and managing expectations. Next time, we'll dive into how to care for your mental health during the holidays - from handling tough moments in real time to finding joy in unexpected moments.

Together, we can continue to create communities where safety, healing, and hope are possible for everyone.



DID YOU KNOW...

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that 64% of individuals living with a mental health disorder felt that their conditions worsened around the holidays.

For tips on how to manage holiday stress, visit <https://deconstructingstigma.org/guides/holidays> or scan the QR code



Between family tension, financial strain, loneliness and grief, there are many factors that can impact the way you experience the holidays. Below we will discuss how we can best prepare ourselves for the upcoming holiday stressors.

- Manage your expectations
 - Make a budget – it is important to not go overboard, even when it seems like you “have to”. Consider a Secret Santa gift exchange rather than buying everyone a ton of gifts, handmaking a gift, or giving the gift of time/activities with your loved ones.
 - Come up with a plan – spread out your errands so you don’t get overwhelmed with too many tasks at once. Be realistic about the amount of time you have for prep, and for actual events throughout the holiday season.
 - Find the best time to shop – if you find you are overwhelmed at Target on a Sunday morning after church, consider visiting during a less busy time if possible, or an online pickup order to eliminate the trip inside.
 - Accept your feelings – the holidays can bring up a range of emotions, sometimes with a disruption in our routines, we can become angry, sad or frustrated. Rather than placing judgment on yourself for having contradictory or “negative” feelings – allow yourself some compassion and allow yourself to feel what you need to feel.
- Maintain healthy habits
 - Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is thought to be related to reduced exposure to sunlight in the colder months, which may affect the way your hypothalamus functions and therefore could impact your melatonin and serotonin production, which impact your sleep, mood and appetite.
 - As discussed earlier, the disruption in your routine can have a negative impact on your mood, so try your best to continue your healthy habits throughout the holiday season – get enough sleep, don’t overindulge on junk food and avoid alcohol especially if you are feeling down. Alcohol is a depressant and will make feelings of sadness or depression worse in the long run. If you feel like you need help relaxing, look for a guided meditation or a mindfulness tactic you may be able to implement at your convenience.
- Set boundaries
 - We often see increased bouts of generosity around the holidays, but generosity does not have to come at the expense of your healthy boundaries. If hosting an event or buying an expensive gift is out of the realm of possibilities; it is okay to say no. If there’s a complicated family dynamic that you want to limit your time around – that is okay too!
 - Whatever your boundaries are, they are yours, and they are okay – it can be helpful to communicate your intentions for the holidays ahead of time so folks can know what to expect.

HAVE AN IDEA OR TOPIC YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?
SEND IT OUR WAY!
TWP@TCHD.NET