

Talking Tazewell

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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 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...

MINDFULNESS: the practice of being fully present and aware of your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surroundings, in the moment, without judgment.

What mindfulness is not: it's not about forcing yourself to only have "positive" thoughts, or emptying your mind. Rather it is the acknowledgement of your thoughts and feelings and letting them pass without letting them carry you away or control you.

If this is something that appeals to you and you have ten minutes – [this guided meditation](#) is a great place to start to dive into mindfulness practices.



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 manage these stressors in real time.

Family tension: People that we love can also be people that drain our energy. Old conflicts can pop up, and sometimes the pressure of “holiday cheer” doesn’t match the reality of family dynamics. This increases the likelihood for feelings of anxiety or like you’re slipping back into old habits or patterns that you have worked hard to break.

- How to support yourself in real time: set limits on what you will (and won’t) take on, take breaks when you need them (step outside for a breath or a minute to yourself), check-in with yourself regularly so you are coming from a grounded place. Maybe check out that mindfulness guided meditation on page 1

Financial strain: The holidays can get expensive fast – between meals gifts, travel, events – it adds up. Combine that with an already tight budget and the looming pressure of consumerism – it can feel like you’re falling short, even when you’re doing your best. This can lead to feelings of guilt, shame or the feeling that you’re not meeting expectations.

- How to support yourself in real time: decide on a spending limit that feels sustainable before you start buying, lean into traditions that center around connection rather than cost, and remind yourself (and others) – your value isn’t defined by what you can buy.

Loneliness: It’s easy to assume that everyone is surrounded by love and joy during the holidays. But that isn’t true for a lot of folks. Even the people who are surrounded by friends and family can still feel lonely or disconnected. Loneliness can intensify feelings of sadness or make it harder to reach out, even when connection can help.

- How to support yourself in real time: Reach out to someone you trust, even to say hi or share a moment or a memory, find community spaces – volunteer or attend holiday events, create small comforting routines and traditions for and with yourself to help bring a sense of warmth and belonging.

Grief: Those who have lost someone or been through a traumatic experience know that grief and loss don’t take a break for the holidays. In fact, the holidays may bring those feelings to the surface. Grief can come in waves and the stark contrast between your internal feelings and the external festivities can make everything feel more intense or overwhelming.

- How to support yourself in real time: Honor your feelings in a way that feels right – share a memory, light a candle, or simply acknowledge the emotion (looking at you, mindfulness), give yourself permission to skip traditions that feel too painful, or let a trusted person know what you need – whether that’s support, space, or something in the middle. People often want to help but are sometimes at a loss as to where to start – letting people know where to meet you can help ease the uncertainty on both ends.

HAVE AN IDEA OR TOPIC YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?

SEND IT OUR WAY!

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