

Holiday Stress

Holidays are times of joy and celebration, but not for everyone or for every celebration. Holidays can come with extra pressures and responsibilities including financial burdens, decorating or hosting pressures, increased expectations like cooking traditions, and much more. Some people will experience stress, anxiety or loneliness over the loss of a loved one or separation from family.

Prevalence

Women are more likely to experience stress as they tend to carry more of the usual holiday burdens. The holiday season is also harder for lower and middle-income families who experience financial stressors.

Symptoms

- Stress caused by unrealistic expectations (from self and others)
- Worry and distress over finances
- Depressed mood, particularly when reminded of sad memories
- A tendency to want things to be perfect and controlled
- Indulging in comfort eating or other possibly harmful coping habits

Tips to Cope with Holiday Stress

Reconsider Expectations

Let go of unrealistic expectations to release unnecessary stress.

Plan Ahead

Staying on track helps reduce last minute stressors and enables more time with family and friends.

Budget Your Spending

Finances can be a huge stressor during the holiday season, and it helps to plan a budget in advance and stick to it when shopping.

Gift Thoughtfully

Remember that it's the thought that counts, not the price tag.

Keep Routines

It is possible to fall out of a regular routine during the holidays but it's important to maintain a schedule to stay on track. This will also facilitate returning to work after the holidays.

Prioritize Health

Exercise lowers stress and anxiety. Avoid unhealthy coping and opt for healthier strategies.

Seek Help

When holiday stress is too much to handle, or you are struggling to cope, consider professional help. [Find a Psychologist](#) today.

Resources – [Coping with Holiday Stress](#), Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Canada

References – Canadian Psychological Association: [Holiday Stress](#)

Canadian Mental Health Association Red Deer: [Holiday Peace of Mind](#)

American Psychological Association: [Holiday Stress](#)