# Ways to Manage Mental Health During the Holidays

The holiday season can be stressful for people for a variety of reasons. Family situations can bring stress, and gifts can bring financial strains. Many people feel that they must be happy during the holidays because it’s a joyous time. However, when someone is struggling with their mental health, they can’t just flip a switch and suddenly be fine. If you are someone who struggles with mental health during the holidays, it’s helpful to remember the quote, “It’s okay not to be okay.”

**Stay on Track with Appointments**

One thing you can do to maintain your mental health through the holidays is to stay on top of all your appointments. For example, if you see a therapist, psychiatrist, or other mental health professional, it’s important to keep yourself on schedule. You may even schedule extra appointments if you need more support throughout this time. There’s nothing wrong with needing a little extra help during this season.

## Stay in Touch with Loved Ones

When people are struggling with mental health, it’s important to stay in touch with people that support you. You can also educate your supporters with things that might be helpful for you to hear during hard times. It’s okay if your supporters don’t always know what to say, even just knowing somewhere is in your corner can be helpful.

## Create Coping Skills

[Coping skills](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/6392-stress-coping-with-lifes-stressors) can be a great thing to prepare before the holidays. You can explore the many different types of coping skills and see what works best for you. Some examples of coping skills are deep breathing, journaling, meditation, reading self-help books, calling a friend, or partaking in a hobby. Finding coping skills that can be practiced anywhere is helpful to have in the back of your mind whenever you need it.

## Add Activities You Enjoy

During the holidays, it’s common to be busy and have several obligations on your calendar. Something that can bring more joy into your holiday season is adding in things you enjoy doing. If you have traditions or activities that you enjoy during this season, grab a friend or partake in them on your own. This can help to improve your mood during stressful times.

## Make Extra Appointments if Needed

As we mentioned above, seeing your therapist more often or seeing one if you don't have one is a great tool to maintain your mental health. CBT (or [cognitive behavioral therapy](https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/cognitive-behavioral-therapy/about/pac-20384610)) is a great tool to use when dealing with negative thoughts. You can do this in person or through teletherapy. [Teletherapy](https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-online-therapy-2795752), or online therapy, can be helpful because you can do it from anywhere. It can be common for people to travel during the holidays, which makes teletherapy the perfect option.

The holiday season can bring connection, joy, and peace. However, it’s also completely [valid](https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/when-holidays-arent-joyful#:~:text=Feeling%20down%20during%20the%20holidays,cultural%20expectation%20to%20be%20joyful) to not feel this way during the holidays. It’s also possible to enjoy parts of the holidays but not others. These times can be complex and bring up a lot of emotions for people. Being gentle with yourself during this time will help you get through it more effectively.

If you are interested in taking the next steps towards starting your therapy journey with us, you can reach out to us here.

**References**

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/cognitive-behavioral-therapy/about/pac-20384610>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/6392-stress-coping-with-lifes-stressors>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-online-therapy-2795752>

<https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/when-holidays-arent-joyful#:~:text=Feeling%20down%20during%20the%20holidays,cultural%20expectation%20to%20be%20joyfu>l

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