# STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS
## *for the Holidays*

**NEW YORK STATE** | **Office of Mental Health**

## KNOW HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOU

**A typical stress reaction may include:**

- temporary difficulty concentrating
- irritability and anger
- fatigue
- stomachache
- difficulty sleeping

**Signs to watch out for:**

- an ongoing/overwhelming worry that keeps you from living everyday life
- excessive irritability and anger
- significant changes in your energy level, eating patterns, or sleep
- not finding enjoyment in things you normally love
- feelings of hopelessness
- thoughts of self-injury or suicide

**Make a mental note of these warning signs, you never know when a friend may need your support and a connection to help.**

If you're feeling this way, please know you are not alone and help is at your fingertips.

## NEED HELP?

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:**
Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org/chat

**Crisis Text Line:** Text "Got5" to 741741

**Trans Lifeline:**
1-877-565-8860

**The Trevor Project**
**Call:** 1-866-488-7386 | **Text:** START to 678678

**NYS HOPEline:** (Problem gambling and chemical dependency hotline)
**Call:** 1-877-8-HOPENY | **Text:** HOPENY

**The NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline:**
**Call:** 800-942-6906 | **Text:** 844-997-2121
**Chat:** opdv.ny.gov

# Practicing these stress management tips routinely can help you manage stress this holiday season:

**Get organized.** Consider using a planner, calendar, or other organizational tool to help you keep track of what you have on your plate. Having all your commitments laid out in front of you can help reduce stress.

Organize your gift-giving, too! Make your list and check it twice to save yourself stress down the road.

**Remind yourself what the season is about.** It's easy to give into the pressures of over-buying, over-thinking, and over-extending ourselves. Prioritize what matters to you and let the rest go without judgement or shame.

**Stay connected to services.** If you live with a mental health condition, the stress of the holiday season can be tough to handle. Stay connected to your mental health provider and stay honest about how you're doing.

**Check in on your friends.** Chances are, you're not the only one feeling the pressure of the holidays. Relating to peers can help.

**Set boundaries to maintain your mental health.** When we give too much of ourselves to others, we can become stressed and resentful. Figure out what commitments, gatherings or events feel good for you, and brainstorm ways that you can protect your mental energy when you're doing them.

**Practice good self-care.** It's easy to neglect these things when there's a lot on our plate. But make sure you still:

- Move your body.
- Get fresh air.
- Eat health foods.
- Get enough sleep.
- Get enough light/Vitamin D.
- Avoid using substances to cope with your stress.

**Let go of the nagging "I should" feeling.** Just because others are doing certain holiday traditions, doesn't mean you should. There is no 'should!' Focus on what feels good. It's okay to skip things that don't bring your family joy, or even take a year off from a tradition.

**Savor the season's small positive moments.** Focusing on the good things that happen to you each day can rewire your brain to think more positively. Take a daily note about the small moments that made you smile.

**Practice mindfulness.** Things like meditation, grounding exercises and deep breathing can be helpful when you're overwhelmed.

**Stay connected to your support networks.** Isolation and loneliness feeds anxiety, especially during the holidays. Find ways to reach out to family, friends, colleagues, faith-based communities, and social organizations.

**Find or create spaces that are not focused on your holiday to-do list.** Have fun! Find time to do the things that make you feel good this holiday season, whether they are holiday-related or not.

**Don't believe everything you see on social media.** Try not to compare yourself to what you see online. People tend to post their best lives on social media and you rarely see the stress and anxiety behind that perfect picture. Everyone struggles sometimes!