



STRESS-FREE HOLIDAY

HEIGHTENED STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON?

The holiday season, though often filled with joy, can also bring stress and take a toll on mental health. Family and social gatherings may spark happiness and connection, but they can also surface loneliness, tension, or conflict—sometimes leading to increased emotional distress and help-seeking. Contrary to popular belief, suicide rates usually decrease during the winter holidays. So while the data show a more positive picture than many expect, we can't forget that mental health matters every season, not just in winter.

Providing resources to manage stress and maintain positive mental health is crucial. Effective coping strategies, such as setting boundaries, seeking social support, and prioritizing self-care, can help individuals navigate this period and enhance well-being. We hope this toolkit helps you take care of yourself and your mind during the holidays.

The Gift of Connection

Building and maintaining social connections is one of the most effective ways to protect your mental health. Research shows that people who regularly interact with friends and family experience less anxiety and recover more quickly from stress. Socializing doesn't have to mean being around big groups all the time; it's about finding the people and spaces where you feel safe and understood. Reaching out might feel uncomfortable at first, but every step toward connection helps strengthen your resilience and sense of belonging.



ACTIVITY

HOLIDAY STRESS MANAGEMENT

Journaling and activity worksheets are more than just something to fill out—they're practical tools that give you a space to express how you're feeling, spot patterns in your stress or anxiety, and take action. Expressive writing—putting your thoughts and emotions into words—gives your brain a chance to release what you've been holding in. Research shows that guided worksheets and expressive writing can help reduce stress, anxiety and distress, especially when used regularly

This holiday-themed worksheet combines journaling prompts and fun, engaging activities to help you manage seasonal stress—whether it's family tension, feeling lonely, or trying to keep up with everything. Download it, and use it any time during the season when you feel the pressure building.



Click on the icon of the journal for the activity

RESOURCES

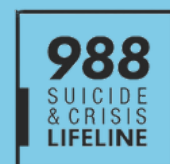
Click the logo for
online resources



Download this toolkit for information and resources on understanding holiday stress; setting realistic expectations; managing time and finances; coping with loneliness and grief; and more.



A 10-minute body scan can help ease tension and promote relaxation. During holiday stress, take a moment to slow down and practice mindful awareness, either alone or with loved ones.



The 988 Lifeline offers self-care ideas for December and beyond.