



NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HOLIDAY PLANS



As COVID-19 concerns continue to mount, many will have to "break" with traditional family gatherings for health/safety precautions. However, every person/family unit may not be in agreement as to the extent of caution to be exercised. As such, you may find yourself in conversations to explain your choices for how you will celebrate the holidays.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

1 ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR EMOTIONS

This holiday season is DIFFERENT and DIFFICULT on everyone, so it's alright to feel disappointed or sad at the break in normalcy.



2 DETERMINE WHAT IS IMPORTANT

What is the most essential part of holidays for you? Is it connecting with family, cooking and communing over food? Or, is it certain religious or family practices? Prioritize this first to determine what you are doing -- you most likely cannot meet all needs/wants this year.



3 BE CONFIDENT IN YOUR CHOICES

Whether you give yourself permission to gather or not to gather -- know your reasons and be confident in them so that you can best communicate them to family and friends. List them on paper if needed.



4 GIVE TIME TO PROCESS, BUT DON'T GIVE IN

While you are experiencing emotions about this year of "change," so are your friends and family. Recognize that they may need time to process BUT don't allow them to make you negotiate or bargain to "try to make them feel better." Don't subject yourself to "guilt" requests. Acknowledge but don't acquiesce.



5 KEEP YOUR HEART IN THE CONVERSATIONS

Assume good intentions even if you hear differing perspectives. Be firm but remain kind. Relationships will outlast the current season.



6 FIND COMMON GROUND/NEW TRADITIONS

Look for places where your values and priorities overlap. Think of virtual or drive-by options for keeping connections. Or, if it's communing over food, think of socially distant solutions for sharing a favorite dish or dessert. Certain practices or traditions don't have to be lost, but perhaps modified -- find the "win-win."

NEW
NEW
NEW
NEW

7 SHARE EXCITEMENT/POSITIVES

Share what IS exciting you about the holidays this year. Whether it's new traditions, or changes in how you will spend your time, consider the "pluses" -- will you cook a new dish? Try a new game with the kids? Or, see relatives over a video call who you usually wouldn't? Think about what you are looking forward to and tell others in these conversations.



8 GIVE YOURSELF ROOM TO BREATHE/REFRESH

Between anxiety due to COVID, or due to the holidays -- it can build up and take a toll. Take time for self-care. Give yourself space to breathe and ask for it in conversations -- it's OK to say "let me get back to you." Just make sure that you do!

breathe