

TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Set realistic boundaries and manage your time

- **Learn to say "no":** It is okay to decline invitations that feel overwhelming or stressful, and you can also limit time spent with challenging family members.
- **Communicate your needs:** Let friends and family know how they can support you, as many people want to help but don't know how or are uncomfortable offering help.
- **Be realistic:** Don't expect perfection. The idealized, happy holidays shown in commercials are not realistic. Adjust expectations for yourself and your family.
- **Create a budget:** Financial stress can exacerbate mental health issues. Setting a budget for gifts and festivities can reduce anxiety.

Prioritize self-care and mindfulness

- **Stick to routines:** Maintain your regular sleep schedule, eat nutritious meals, and try to get some fresh air and sunlight.
- **Practice mindfulness:** Use techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or journaling to help you stay grounded and manage stress.
- **Schedule breaks:** Build in time for yourself to rest and recharge, whether it's for a few minutes or a longer period, to step away from stressful situations.
- **Limit alcohol and social media:** These can contribute to the "holiday blues".

Stay connected and seek support

- **Lean on your support system:** Reach out to friends, family, or a support group. Make time for meaningful connections.
- **Stay in therapy:** If you are in therapy, try to keep your regularly scheduled appointments.
- **Contact a crisis line:** If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, dial or text 988 anytime in the US and Canada to connect with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Manage grief and loss

- **Acknowledge grief:** The holidays can be a difficult time for those who have suffered any type of loss. Allow yourself to experience grief and be kind to yourself.
- **Find moments of gratitude:** Reflect on all that you are grateful for.

988-Hotline for those in crisis or those dealing with a person in crisis
NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) www.nami.org