

Cancer, COVID-19, and the Holidays

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

The holidays can be stressful, even without cancer's added challenges. This year the COVID-19 pandemic can raise stress levels even further. Wendy Hall, LCSW, offers these ways to cope.

1. Keep things simple. The side effects from cancer and its treatment can ramp up your fatigue and lower your immunity, so focus on just one or two traditions that are special

to you. If you are social distancing from friends and family, consider modifying some traditions, like visiting online rather than in person. Some websites can also let you post audio and video greetings for loved ones to enjoy.

2. Shop online. Large crowds can be stressful in the best of times. Cancer can make those crowds harder to navigate, and a pandemic

can increase infection risk even for people without health issues. Shopping online has become the answer for many. Most stores have great customer service staff available to help. Due to the pandemic, some neighborhood stores may now offer home delivery. Gift cards can also be bought online.

3. Love is priceless. If money is tight, heartfelt, homemade gifts and

"Thinking of You" notes go a long way to let someone know they are in your thoughts. If you are social distancing, you can send a digital creation or greeting.

4. Ask for help. People will want to know how you are doing. Consider sharing that information via email or in a video greeting. You can ask a close friend to share the details if doing so directly makes you feel uncomfortable. If you are gathering in person for the holidays, asking guests to bring a dish to share can keep your work load from becoming overwhelming.

5. Learn and accept your limitations. If you visit others, be aware of the physical stress that entertaining and traveling puts on your body. Use discretion when selecting which holiday invitations to accept. If you go out of town, consider staying in a hotel instead of in a family member's home. This may help you relax and restore your energy and give you more control over your space and time.

6. Remember the true meaning of the holidays. Finally, don't concentrate on what may be missing or is different from past holidays. Try to focus on the present moment and enjoy your celebration in whatever form it takes. Remember what the holidays are truly about: a time for renewed friendships, being thankful, and sharing with others.

We are here to help. Call our social workers Wendy Hall, LCSW at 352-527-0106 or Amy Roberts, LCSW at 352-732-0277 with any questions or concerns.

14.2%

US Adults practicing meditation in 2017, National Health Interview Survey (more than three times the percentage from 2012)

47%

People saying finances are the greatest cause of stress during the holidays (Healthline survey, 2019)

69%

Employees saying COVID-19 is the most stressful time of their entire career (survey by mental health provider Ginger)

27%

Americans with children who start to feel stressed about the holiday season by the beginning of November (Total Brain survey, 2019)



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Meditation can be done anywhere and anytime without special equipment or an expensive membership. Let Amy Roberts, LCSW, take you through guided meditation that addresses a variety of issues. Sessions can help you reduce anxiety, experience gratitude, release worries and regrets, and simply relax. You can also join RBOI's weekly meditation group. All sessions are free of charge. Visit www.rboi.com and click on "Guided Meditation" under "Cancer Support." Relax your mind and breathe easy this holiday season and beyond.

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