



Cancer and the Holidays

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

The holidays can be stressful, even without cancer's added challenges. COVID-19 and other health concerns 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 diseases like COVID-19, flu, and RSV can still 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. Some neighborhood businesses 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.



by the numbers

55%

Cancer patients and survivors who expressed concern over being there for family and friends (National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship Survey, 2022)

64%

Individuals living with a mental illness who felt their conditions worsened around the holidays (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

66%

Adults who said they are anxious about their health (Morning Consult poll for the American Psychiatric Association, April 2023).

76%

Adults who said they have experienced health impacts due to stress in the prior month (American Psychological Association, 2022 Stress in America™ survey).

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.

Give Yourself the Gift of Mindfulness

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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