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EAP EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER



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DEER OAKS EAP PRESENTS:

November On-Demand Seminar

The Sandwich Generation at Work

Available on-demand starting on November 22nd
Access via deeroakseap.com

Twelve Ways to Have a Healthy Holiday Season

Brighten the holidays by making your health and safety a priority. Take steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy—and ready to enjoy the holidays:

1. **Wash hands often to help prevent the spread of germs.** It's flu season, plus coronavirus is always a concern. Wash your hands with soap and clean, running water for at least 20 seconds.
2. **Bundle up to stay dry and warm.** Wear appropriate outdoor clothing: light, warm layers; gloves, hats, scarves, and waterproof boots.
3. **Manage stress.** Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out, overwhelmed, and out of control. Some of the best ways to manage stress are to find support, connect socially, and get plenty of sleep.
4. **Don't drink and drive, or let others drink and drive.** Whenever anyone drives drunk, they put everyone on the road in danger. Choose not to drink and drive, and help others do the same.
5. **Be smoke free.** Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke. Smokers have greater health risks because of their tobacco use, but nonsmokers also are at risk when exposed to tobacco smoke.
6. **Fasten seat belts while driving or riding in a motor vehicle.** Always buckle your children in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to their height, weight, and age. Buckle up every time, no matter how short the trip, and encourage passengers to do the same.
7. **Get exams and screenings.** Ask your health care provider what exams you need and when to get them. Update your personal and family history.
8. **Get your vaccinations.** Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Everyone age six months and older should get a flu vaccine each year, and get the COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with local or national health recommendations.
9. **Monitor children.** Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, and other objects out of children's reach. Protect them from drowning, burns, falls, and other potential accidents.
10. **Practice fire safety.** Most residential fires occur during the winter months, so don't leave fireplaces, space heaters, food cooking on stoves, or candles unattended. Have an emergency plan, and practice it regularly.
11. **Prepare food safely.** Remember these simple steps: Wash hands and surfaces often, avoid cross-contamination, cook foods to proper temperatures, and refrigerate foods promptly.
12. **Eat healthy foods, and stay active.** Eat fruits and vegetables, which pack nutrients and help lower the risk for certain diseases. Limit your portion sizes and foods high in fat, salt, and sugar. Also, be active for at least two-and-a-half hours a week, and help kids and teenagers be active for at least one hour a day.



Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of Minority Health & Health Equity (OMHHE). (Reviewed 2019, December 10). 12 ways to have a healthy holiday season. Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov>

Fighting Depression Around the Holidays

As the holidays approach and another year comes to an end, many enter a period of reflection. Reflection can offer an opportunity to revel in the many exciting events of the year, or it can cause us to be consumed with self-doubt and regret. Instead of focusing on the promotions, new friends, and exciting vacations, for example, people remember all of things they had hoped to accomplish—losing weight, going back to school, learning to cook—the list can be endless and overwhelming. Fortunately, however, the challenges that come with managing depression during the holidays are not impossible.

Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms

Identify the issue. While the signs and symptoms of depression can vary, there are some hallmarks that can alert you or those around you that you may be feeling a bit down.

- Fatigue
- Eating more or less
- Sleeping more or less
- Inability to concentrate
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Depressed mood most of the time
- Lack of interest in activities that you used to enjoy

One of the most important factors in identifying these changes is self-awareness. Do yourself a favor and take note of how you generally live your life. Do you get together with friends on a weekly basis, enjoy hiking, or go to the gym often? If you wake up one day in December and have a difficult time remembering the last time you did any of these, it might be a sign that you are not acting or feeling like yourself.

Preventing Depression

Depression is not impossible to overcome, but why fight an unnecessary battle? If you know that you might be prone to feeling a little down during this holiday season, plan your preemptive attack now!

Create a plan for your holiday.

Goals give you something to focus on and preoccupy your mind. So fill your mind with something exciting and productive this holiday. Not into the holiday jingles and twinkling lights? Dedicate a portion of your time to

volunteer work or commit to catching up with old friends, and be accountable. Make some phone calls early in the season and get these appointments on your calendar. Who has time to think about the forgotten New Year's resolution when there are smiling children to read to or meals to be had with old friends?

Create new traditions.

Is this your first holiday away from your family who live in another state? If so, change your focus from longing for holidays past to designing the footprint for your very own holiday traditions. Print up some nice invitations for your first annual holiday party, or book your first of many holiday vacations. Whatever you decide to do, take ownership and control over how your valuable downtime is spent.



Finding Solutions

When you realize that a depressed mood has crept into your life, take action sooner rather than later. Remember that depressive symptoms have a tendency to increase in intensity—as do their impact on your mood, activity level, and motivation. Waiting until later may mean that you have less energy and motivation to tackle the weight of your emotions.

Regroup and reorganize.

When you realize that something has gone awry, develop a new game plan. Take a step back from all of your commitments and responsibilities, and evaluate what has changed in your life. Have you taken on too many tasks? Have you forgotten your goals and aspirations? Have you lost touch with the friends and family members who keep you grounded? Make a list of what is lacking in your life and what may need to be cut.

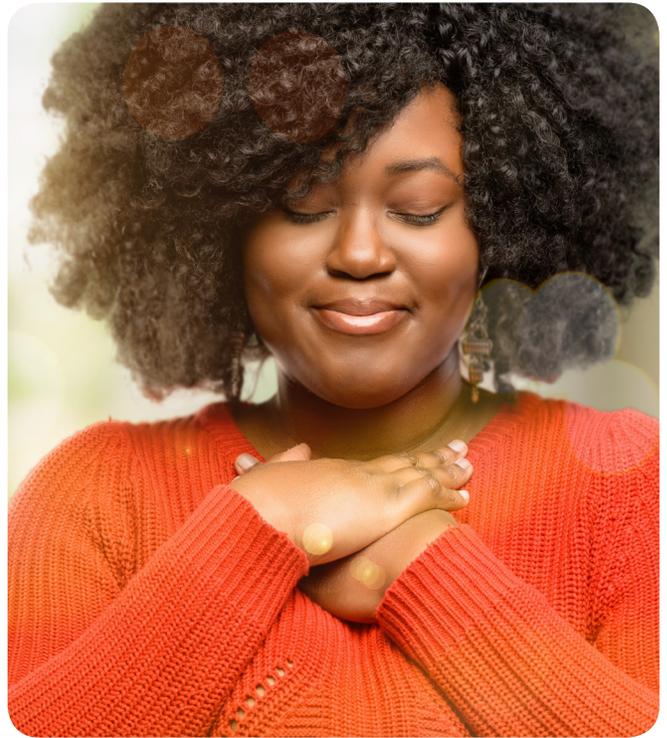
Utilize your resources.

Many companies offer their employees access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). In addition to providing counseling services, EAPs often provide other services, like help with locating child care or elder care services, providing legal advice, offering financial planning, and research help to assist with some of the things on your to-do list. It is sometimes difficult to ask for help, but the result can be worthwhile.

Be kind to yourself.

The holiday season often reminds people to be nice and generous to others, but it is also important for you to be kind to yourself. Remember that variations in your mood are a part of being human, and getting back on track takes time. If you find yourself feeling sad or tearful, allow yourself to experience these very normal emotions, and make no apologies for them. You are human. You are capable. You can survive the holiday season!

Source: Burrell, S. (Reviewed 2020). Fighting depression around the holidays. Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.



Managing Finances This Holiday Season

Stay on track financially this holiday season!

The excitement of the holiday season is in full swing, but this year many people may find that their tank is running low on holiday cheer. Dealing with the challenges of a global pandemic and inflation has taken a toll on many aspects of people's lives, including finances. You may not have the money to spend on gifts that you normally would have this time of year, but with self-discipline and some creative ideas, you can still show love to those that mean the most to you.

Start off by being honest with yourself and your loved ones regarding your financial situation. If you have not already done so, create a budget to see what you can realistically spend on gifts, food, and travel associated with the holidays. Make sure that the essentials are covered first, with a little extra padding for the unexpected. Then determine who and what you will shop for, staying within the constraints of your spending plan.

It is important to avoid taking on unnecessary debt during this time. It is very important to maintain a financial safety net. This cushion may be needed in the event of an emergency. If you must purchase holiday travel or items using credit, try to use offers that will charge no or low interest, for example zero-percent-financing offers or 90-days-same-as-cash deals.

Focus on ways that you can save and create extra money. Now is the perfect time to cash in on merchant coupons and rewards programs. There are countless numbers of apps that can help you find hidden savings by shopping in your favorite stores. Look for temporary holiday jobs that can create extra pockets of cash, such as food- or grocery-delivery services. You may also be able to sell those used items around your home, such as clothes, gadgets, and video games.

Be creative and thrifty with gifts. Consider homemade baked goods, crafts, and gifts that showcase your artistic side. Re-gift, reuse, and refurbish items that you may already have to make them work for your purpose.

Remember, love is the greatest gift of all and costs absolutely nothing to give. Express your heartfelt sentiment in a poem or story. This will be a present your loved one will forever treasure.

By Darlette S. McCormick, Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC), Certified in Healthcare Compliance (CHC)

Source: McCormick, D.S. (2020, December 9). Managing finances this holiday season (C. Gregg-Meeker & B. Schuette, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.