PATHWAYS
December 2023

Mastering Family Get-together Stress

Don't let family get-togethers plunge into stressful discussions. Try these three artful conversational skills. First, plainly decide your comfort zone for specific topics. Decide your boundaries and avoid initiating comments or conversations regarding them. Second, communicate your boundaries with assertiveness and respect while maintaining a harmonious atmosphere. Simply say: "I'd appreciate steering our conversation away from [topic] for a more pleasant interaction for all." Finally, use the "redirect." Gently guide discussions away from sensitive subjects, shifting the focus toward neutral or positive topics. This tactful redirection effectively diffuses tension, fostering a more harmonious and enjoyable gathering for all participants. Hint: Before your next get-together, hone these skills. See if they help create more joyful memories.

Source:https://www.healthpartners.com/blog/how-to-survive-family-gatherings-and-the-stress-that-can-come-from-them/

Volunteerism: The Perfect Pick-me-up

The positive effects of volunteering to help others have been demonstrated in many research studies. These include improved feelings of well-being and positive effects on a person's mood and general happiness. Along with helping others, these personal benefits are powerful motivators for some people affected by sadness, depression, and stress during the holidays to reach out for support. Research has also shown volunteering can have positive effects on physical health, including lowered blood pressure, reduced risk of heart disease, and increased longevity. Could you use some of the good things that flow from volunteering? To find thousands of opportunities, try www.idealist.org or www.volunteermatch.org and [click on "find opportunities"].

Source: psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-21685-006

Slips and Falls in Workplaces

In 2021, 44,686 people died from falls at home and at work. 850 workers died in falls and hundreds of thousands were injured to require days off of work. But falls are preventable. The most common contributing factors to slips and falls such as office building workplaces include slippery floors, uneven surfaces like mats and loose rugs, poor lighting, cluttered walkways, open drawers, loose cords, and footwear. One of the more common causes of falling has nothing to do with your feet, it's rushing to get something done. Learn more from the National Floor Safety Institute at nfsi.org.

Source:https://www.nsc.org/work-safety/safety-topics/slips-trips-and-falls

Avoid Parental Frustration with HIPPA Laws

Most children at age 18 are still in the care of their parents or guardians to some degree, but they are adults in the eyes of the federal government's Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). HIPAA regulations protect the privacy of health records. As a parent, you might be astonished by your inability to gain on-demand access to your child's health information, including mental health information such as their diagnosis, treatment regimen, and even medications without your child's prior consent. This is true even if you are physically present with your child at the health appointment or are the only parent. Communicate with your "adult" child in advance to complete HIPAA release forms to avoid being frustrated by providers' obligation to protect patient information.

Adult Child Independence and Failure to Launch

The term "failure to launch" describes young adults who are still living at home with their parents and are not taking on the responsibilities of adulthood. This can be distressing for parents, and it can create marital conflict over how to intervene. Parents feel conflicted when they enter a cycle of enabling because they are fearful the adult child cannot successfully grasp the responsibilities of adulthood. Although there are steps along with many parenting resources for helping resolve failure-to-launch syndrome, a professional counselor can be of enormous benefit if the crisis has existed long term without resolution. Although mental health issues like anxiety and depression can make it difficult to transition into adulthood, often parent overprotection (doing too much for too long) can make it difficult for some adult children to learn the skills they need in order to become independent. Your path to resolving failure-to-launch syndrome will include challenges like setting clear expectations and responsibilities or requiring chores. Creating new rules regarding financial support encouraging independence and working through the natural resistance to change can be expected. The goal is to diminish returning to a cycle of enabling and creating a boundary between supporting your adult child and enabling them. You are not alone in this struggle. With patience, understanding, and support, you can help your child overcome the challenge of becoming an independent adult.

Source: https://www.choosingtherapy.com/failure-to-launch-syndrome/

Holiday Foods to Target Alcohol's Effects

Here are the foods you may want to consider serving because they best slow the rate of alcohol absorption at a holiday party. Fatty foods: cheese, avocados, nuts, and meats. These foods may help coat the stomach lining, slowing the passage of alcohol into the bloodstream. Foods high in protein: chicken, fish, eggs, and tofu. Protein takes longer to digest, potentially delaying alcohol's entry into the bloodstream. Fiber-rich foods: fruits, vegetables, and legumes. Fiber can potentially delay the passage of alcohol into the bloodstream by slowing down digestion. Important! Drinking responsibly and having a designated driver or alternate transportation are still key to hosting a safe social event.

Could a Sleep Tracker App Help?

Many people have experimented with sleep-tracking tools—wearable devices or mobile apps that can offer insights into the quantity of sleep you achieve in a day. A 2023 survey found that more than 77% of those who have tried these devices found them beneficial. Talk to your doctor about your sleep quality and follow what is recommended, But here are a few sleep app tips: 1) Don't rely entirely on sleep trackers for assessing sleep. They might create undue stress or anxiety if the data suggests poor sleep. This could reduce sleep quality. 2) Don't check sleep data in the middle of the night, for those same reasons. 3) Don't rely solely on the data—it could overlook other factors affecting your sleep. Consider your stress, diet, or health issues. 4) Keep lights dim and create a comfortable environment. 5) Put your phone away and shut down electronics 30 min before you go to sleep. 6) Try meditating or taking a bath before bedtime. If the problem persists seek medical treatment. Use a sleep tracker as a supportive tool, not the last word on diagnosing a condition. For a complete picture, talk with your doctor and/or a sleep medicine physician to whom you might be referred.

Learn more at www.hopkinsmedicine.org [search: "do sleep trackers work"
and aasm.org/ [search "sleep tracker"]

Source: https://aasm.org/one-in-three-americans-have-used-electronic-sleep-trackers-leading-to-changed-behavior-for-many/

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