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## MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

### A GUIDE TO SURVIVING FAMILY GATHERINGS

Anticipating holiday gatherings, events, and activities may fill you with excitement, but it can also come with a touch of anxiety. A poll from the [American Psychiatric Association](#) revealed that 47% of Americans look forward to a warm and loving environment during this season, centered around reconnecting with friends, family, and loved ones.

However, for many individuals, the holidays are anything but stress-free and can even lead to anxiety. During these times, loneliness and grief can also be heightened. On top of the inevitable complexities and tensions of family relationships, you may be feeling the pressures of holiday shopping, gift and travel expenses, the stress of hosting gatherings or managing a packed calendar of holiday events.

In this context, stress has the potential to cast a shadow over the joyous aspects of the holiday season. Here are some coping strategies to help you bolster your mental health during the holidays:

- **Practice Mindfulness and Meditation:** Incorporate mindfulness during travel or busy schedules using online resources and apps, such as Self Care from AbleTo or meQuilibrium which can be accessed through your ThriveOn account at [fccThriveOn.com](http://fccThriveOn.com).
- **Preventing Burnout – It's OK to Say No:** Focus on joy and emotional recharge by prioritizing the people or activities you love and simplify tasks to avoid unnecessary stress during the holiday season.
- **Take a break:** Anticipate potential family conflicts, take preventive steps, and step away if tensions rise during conversations.
- **Get Some Fresh Air and Sunlight:** Engage in outdoor activities for mental health benefits. Sunlight and nature contribute to stress relief and improved mental energy.
- **Grief and Loss:** Coping with grief during the holidays, especially the first season without a loved one, can be challenging. Rather than avoiding memories, embrace them by sharing stories with family and friends, highlighting the important aspects of your loved one's personality.
- **Financial stress:** Avoid holiday overspending by celebrating together and expressing affection through presence, engagement, and support. Consider alternatives like gift exchanges or homemade gifts.

As you navigate the holiday season, prioritize self-care, realistic expectations, and gratitude for meaningful relationships. Remember, it's okay to opt out of family gatherings if needed and do something different this year.

## WORLD AIDS DAY WEBINAR

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20TH | 12 PM

In recognition of World's AIDS Day celebrated on December 1st, The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is hosting a webinar on December 20th with Ronald G. Murray, Associate Director of Health Advocacy at Equitas Health. It will focus on AIDS awareness in black and brown communities in Franklin County, ongoing efforts to eliminate AIDS as a public health threat, and ways to advocate against AIDS. The webinar will be streamed on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners [Facebook](#) page.

## ILLUMINATE THE NIGHT

WITH HOLIDAY LIGHTS IN COLUMBUS

As Columbus gears up for the holidays, it becomes a dazzling spectacle of lights and festive events. Explore key attractions and activities to embrace the holiday spirit and illuminate your nights in the city.

### Fun for the Holidays:

- [Wildlights! Columbus Zoo & Aquarium | until 1/7](#)
- [Conservatory Aglow at Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens | until 1/7](#)
- [Butch Bando's Fantasy of Lights | until 1/1](#)
- [Columbus Commons Lights \(FREE\) | until 1/1](#)
- [Dawes Arboretum Winter Wonder Walks | until 12/16](#)
- [Santa's Mailboxes Around Columbus \(FREE\) | until 12/17](#)

Columbus comes alive at night during the holidays, offering a magical backdrop for cherished traditions. Explore illuminated wonders, create lasting memories, and find more information [HERE](#).



## CREATING A FRAGRANCE FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

### A CONSIDERATION FOR EVERYONE

Did you know that approximately [32.2 percent](#) of the population encounters adverse health effects from exposure to scented products? While it's easy to point to perfumes and colognes, fragrances lurk in everyday items like air fresheners, scented candles, laundry detergents, toiletries, cosmetics, pesticides, and more. What might be a delightful scent to some could pose a health risk to others, making it challenging for those with fragrance sensitivities to navigate the workplace.

As we continue the holiday season, it's crucial to extend our consideration beyond the usual suspects of scented products. Festive additions like seasonal air fresheners, scented candles reminiscent of holiday spices, or even workplace decorations infused with winter-themed scents can inadvertently create challenges for coworkers with fragrance sensitivities.

### SO WHAT?

Consider this: some of your coworkers may have sensitivities to fragrances, leading to a spectrum of symptoms upon exposure. These symptoms can range from headaches and nausea to congestion and difficulty breathing. It's essential to recognize that, over time, you might become desensitized to your own chosen fragrance if used consistently, potentially overlooking its overpowering effect on someone with fragrance sensitivities.

To create a truly pleasant work environment, it's imperative to cultivate awareness about fragrance sensitivities among your colleagues. This is particularly important during the holiday season when festive scents flourish. By taking proactive steps to minimize the use of overpowering scents in shared spaces and choosing fragrance-free alternatives, you contribute to a workplace where everyone can thrive, regardless of their sensitivities.

# Maddie's Culinary Commentary

Provided by OhioHealth

## SWAP Technique for Tackling Emotional Eating:

**Say**- Consider how you feel & say it out loud, if you aren't truly hungry, move to "W"

**Wait**- Take a deep breath and count to 5, sitting with your emotions

**Address** the feeling- Think about other ways to satisfy your emotion without food

**Pursue** an activity- Try a satisfying activity in place of food, like a walk, watching a show, or calling a friend

## Simple Holiday Recipe:

Vibrant Winter Kale and Brussel Sprout Salad - Sunkissed Kitchen

## Eating Mindfully During the Holidays

1. **Don't save calories**- Skipping meals before a feast can lead to excessive cravings and overeating. Eating a breakfast with some protein & fiber is the perfect way to start the holiday!
2. **"Add-In" Nutrition**- Enjoy the holiday treats, but add in some lean protein like turkey and some fruit & veggie sides to give you energy, feel full longer, & give your body the nutrients it needs.
3. **Leave the clean plate club**- Avoid feeling overstuffed by listening to your body. If you feel full, you can stop eating. Know that you can always come back and get some more later when you're hungry again.



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Schedule a nutrition counseling session with Maddie by visiting [this link](#).