

Facing the Holidays



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THE HOLIDAYS FROM THANKSGIVING TO NEW YEAR'S DAY ARE supposed to be happy family times. But many people have a hard time because of family problems and disappointments that happen during the holidays. They may feel overwhelmed or depressed.

Here are some ways to head off some problems before they happen:

Be Realistic

- Don't worry about the "should bes" but look at the "can bes" of the holiday. Don't expect too much from the people around you.
- Don't overwork yourself with getting ready for the holidays. You don't have to make it right for everyone else.
- Be careful with your money. Don't use a credit card to buy things you can't afford. Decide ahead of time how much to spend and stick with your decision.
- The holidays can bring back memories of friends and family who have died. They can also make feelings about separation and divorce even more difficult, especially if your children are not with you for the holidays. Admit the sad feelings are there. But then plan positive things to do like spending time at another person's house for the holidays instead of being alone, or having a special Christmas with your kids, even if it's not on the day itself.

Ask for Help

- You don't have to do everything for everyone. Ask for help with things you want to do for the holidays; for example, baking, shopping, or visiting friends and relatives.
- If child care is a problem, ask a friend to take your children for a short time during a day, and offer to do the same for your friend at a later time.
- Make sure you talk to someone you like during the holidays. Talking to a good friend is a good way to take care of yourself.

Be Creative

- Sometimes you can't celebrate the holidays the way you'd like. But each place where you live has special things going on. Many organizations offer programs such as meals, sing-alongs, and other activities.
- If you have children, let them get involved with getting ready for the holidays.
- If you can't afford to do holiday things on your own, try to join with another family to share some activities.
- You don't have to spend a lot of money to enjoy the holidays. You can make homemade gifts for others.

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