

Enjoying The Holidays While Keeping Your Cool

Holiday celebrations. Times filled with fun and laughter or times when tempers flare and arguments arise. Sometimes, gatherings of family and friends bring out the worst in people and just because that's the way it has been, doesn't mean this year has to be the same.

Here are five tips on how to keep your cool, so stress and anxiety don't get the best of you.

1) **Decide what is most important.**

For most people, holiday preparations and celebrations take place sometime between late November and early January. That's roughly 6 weeks to fit in shopping, baking, and gift giving, to name just a few of the things that get added to an already busy schedule.

Before the season begins, make a list of the activities and events that are scheduled, or you anticipate being

scheduled, and rate each on a scale of 1-10 (10 being very important, 1 not important at all). Anything that doesn't rank above an 8 could be omitted.



- 2) **Set realistic boundaries.** Sometimes several events get crowded into a space of 48 hours and choices must be made. Decide before the holiday season hits on what is most important to you and your immediate family. Maybe logistically you can attend 4 events in one day, but will you enjoy each event? If the point is to get together and celebrate, does it have to occur on a specific date on the calendar? These can be challenging conversations to have, yet necessary if you desire to minimize the stress during the holiday season.

- 3) **Avoid taking the bait.** Family gatherings are breeding grounds for all kinds of snarky remarks. When someone tries to hook you by making derogatory remarks, simply let it pass. Consider this visualization exercise: before entering the party, wrap an invisible, impenetrable shield around your entire body, from head to toe. Any hurtful or nasty remark is unable to pierce this shield and will bounce right off. Using this technique will help you deflect any unkind remarks made by others.

- 4) **Let go of the past.** So many memories are associated with holiday parties and events. While it can be fun to take a trip down memory lane, avoid getting sucked into the vortex of, *I wish I had acted differently, or, I wish I had said something else.* Stay present in the event you are attending and send intruding thoughts or painful memories on their merry way. Acknowledge the thought or memory and then let it go.

- 5) **Take a walk.** When you begin to feel overwhelmed, a change of scenery can help. Excuse yourself and go in another room, or weather permitting, take a brisk walk around the block.

Bonus tip - Want to talk it out? We are here for you. Call 800-448-8326. Our Life Advisor Consultants are standing by to help you enjoy the holidays (or any other day of the year.)

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your
Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**