



Mental Health &
Recovery Services
Board of Allen,
Auglaize, and
Hardin Counties

December 2020 School Newsletter Article

Managing the Holidays During COVID-19

The holidays will look different for most of us this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the holiday season often brings an increase in stress, this year will look different from the stress we expect and know how to manage.

There are ways you can manage this stress to have a healthier holiday season. Remember, children are impacted by their parents' stress. Take time to prioritize your mental health.

1) Make Alternate Plans. Don't put off deciding how to celebrate the holidays. Pick your family's favorite traditions you can still safely practice. If you normally have a family potluck, share recipes with your relatives. If you normally attend tree lighting events, drive around neighborhoods to see the lights. There are plenty of things you can still do to celebrate this year!

2) Don't Romanticize Your Typical Holiday Plans. Even though you may be giving up some of your favorite things about the holidays this year, you might be leaving behind stressors too. Maybe you're not traveling all day or cooking all day or shopping in stores all month for the whole family. The holidays are often stressful. It's okay to miss the usual traditions but don't forget even those aren't perfect.

3) Identify How You Are Feeling. It is completely normal for you to be feeling more emotional than usual right now. Take time to sort through your emotions. Trying journaling, talking to a friend or confidant, or even naming each emotion while alone. Once you identify your feelings, you can make plans to cope with them.

4) Acknowledge What You've Lost. Processing grief is an important part of life. You might miss loved ones this time of year. Think of ways to honor them during your festivities. Maybe you've lost a job or are experiencing financial strain. Take time to recognize the challenges that come with that. Or maybe you've lost a sense of normalcy. It's okay to grieve that.

5) Practice Gratitude. It is customary to focus on gratitude this time of year. It may seem harder to find things to appreciate but there are still things to be thankful for. Identify those. Gratitude helps our mental health. If you are feeling down, identify the things you're grateful for. It could be broad like your kids or your health, or specific like your favorite music is playing on the radio or you got to take a walk with your dog.

If you or a loved one are feeling more than the holiday blues, call the 24/7 Hopeline at 1-800-567-4673.