

Rosario Counseling

&

Associates

November 2013 E-News



Surviving the Holidays

The holidays are filled with meaningful traditions, spiritual renewal and connecting with family and friends. During this time of year clients often ask how to manage their stress, cope with difficult relatives or react more favorably when the holiday they planned turns upside down. This time of year can be stressful with added responsibilities, hosting gatherings, increased spending, and attempts not to forget anyone on your Christmas shopping list. People often get burned out by fatigue, disappointment and depressed from maintaining unrealistic expectations, going through the motion of obligation and losing the meaning of each holiday while keeping a frantic pace. When your world proves far from peaceful rest assured there is always a way to maintain a healthy perspective.



Robin Rosario, MA, LPCS

Clinical Director

If you or someone you know is struggling this holiday season, one of our experienced therapists can help. Please call (919) 649-5882 for more information.



1. **Take a Deep Breath** – This simple technique will give your serotonin a boost to improve your mood. Deep breathing sends a calming effect to the brain which in turns lowers your epinephrine levels, the bodies fight or flight hormones, while gradually raising your serotonin levels. Start with a deep breath in through the nose then exhale through the mouth, repeat several times.
2. **Reflection** – Have you ever taken time to reflect on what Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years represent? How can you bring about meaningful traditions without creating complex to do's. What would you like this holiday season to look like? How do you want to feel? Does your past holiday seasons reflect what you value or see as important? What are your immediate families' favorite traditions?
3. **Create Manageable Goals** – Start fresh, clean the slate by removing all the unnecessary tasks, gatherings or obligations that create exhaustion, stress and frustration. Simplify by choosing to keep only meaningful traditions. Avoid overextending yourself by setting obtainable goals.
4. **Set Realistic Expectations** – Ask yourself what is reasonable? Consider the amount of energy, time and resources necessary to fulfill your goals then evaluate is this realistic.
5. **Leave Room for Margins** – Be mindful of creating empty space on your calendar for rest, family time and rejuvenation. In the event of a last minute changes, unexpected guest or a crisis you will have the time to manage it.
6. **Utilize a Support System** – Often those that you gather with are part of your circle of friends or family so enlist their support by sharing the responsibilities for food preparation or even catering for your holiday meal to free you to enjoy family and friends. Contact a member of your support system if you begin to feel overwhelmed to gain perspective. Enlist your children or spouse to share in the preparations.



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While this time of year may prove challenging, all things are possible to enjoy a joyful thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!