

Managing the Holidays

3 Trigger Points of Holiday Stress:

1. **Relationships:** Relationships can cause stress or conflict at any time. Tensions are often heightened during the holidays.
2. **Finances:** Overspending during the holidays on gifts, travel, and entertainment can increase stress as you try to make ends meet while keeping everyone on your “list” happy.
3. **Physical Demands:** The strain of shopping, attending social gatherings, and preparing holiday meals can wipe you out.

Remember the 5 Ps:

1. **Prioritize:** Decide what things are the most meaningful to you during the holidays. Focus on those and DELEGATE or DELETE the rest.
2. **Perspective:** The holidays will only be here for a month or so. Realize that most people feel stressed, busy, and overwhelmed during the holidays.
3. **Preconceived ideas:** Banish thoughts about what a holiday “should be”
4. **Planning:** Before you agree to any activity say, “I need to check my calendar first.” Then you will have time to think about whether the activity will overload or detract you from enjoying your holiday.
5. **Permission:** Give yourself permission to feel the way you do and make the choices you need to make. DON'T COMPARE YOUR ACTIONS AND FEELINGS WITH ANYONE ELSE!

Managing Holiday Parties:

- Take an extra long rest before the party starts.
- Before you are tired, take periodic “rests” or breaks during the party. Talk to the host about selecting a quiet place where you can rest. This will help you enjoy the party longer.
- Consider pulling friends into a quiet corner to talk.
- Food: ask a friend or family member to assist in watching how much you eat.

Managing Holiday Shopping:

- Prepare ahead. Decide ahead of time where to go and what to buy.
- Park in the same place or write down where you parked in your planner.
- Limit time spent in malls or among crowds.
- Take breaks in the dressing rooms or wherever it is quiet.
- Consider a bag on wheels or using a shopping cart to minimize fatigue.
- Take advantage of online shopping.

Managing a Holiday Budget:

- Make a spending plan and stick to it.
- Pay cash. Credit card users typically spend twice as much money as others.
- Don’t shop when you are tired. It may affect your resolve to keep to your budget.
- Cut back on extras like dining out, entertainment, and extra clothing.
- Try things out at a store and then buy them on clearance online.
- Give homemade gifts or coupons for babysitting time, a massage, etc.