

# Coping during the holidays

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The holiday season can be a stressful time for everyone, but it can be especially challenging for people in recovery. You may be worried that feelings of anxiety, loneliness, worry, stress, or grief will make it difficult to stay sober over the holidays. Here are some suggestions to help you maintain sobriety during this time.

## Dealing with triggers

Holiday gatherings can be triggering. It may be hard to be with people who are drinking, and time with family may bring unpleasant or traumatic memories to the surface. There are lots of websites that offer tips on how to deal with substance use triggers during the holidays. Here are a few examples:

- [www.everydayhealth.com/news/ways-avoid-holiday-addiction-relapses/](http://www.everydayhealth.com/news/ways-avoid-holiday-addiction-relapses/)
- [www.everydayhealth.com/alcoholism/how-two-women-with-alcohol-use-disorder-get-through-the-holidays/](http://www.everydayhealth.com/alcoholism/how-two-women-with-alcohol-use-disorder-get-through-the-holidays/)

## Finding activities

There are usually lots of public events going on during the holiday season. If you're feeling lonely or at loose ends, look online for some local activities to attend, or try the following suggestions:

- Have some outdoor fun! Try skating, tobogganing, or going for a winter walk.
- Take a walk downtown to look at the holiday lights.
- Do some volunteering with a local food bank or kitchen.

## Practicing self-care

Sometimes, especially around the holidays, we get so busy and stressed that we forget to take care of ourselves. Try to take some time every day to check in with yourself and give yourself the things you need to keep yourself healthy. Here are some suggestions for taking care of yourself:

- Take care of your **physical** health by eating nourishing food, keeping hydrated, getting plenty of sleep, and exercising.
- Take care of your **emotional** health by listening to music you love, journaling, drawing, or connecting with people you care about.
- Take care of your **spiritual** health by attending religious services, participating in rituals that are meaningful to you, meditating or praying, or just giving yourself some time and space to be still.

Check out these websites for some self-care ideas:

- <https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/developing-a-self-care-plan>
- <https://www.webmd.com/balance/ss/slideshow-self-care-tips>
- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/self-care-strategies-holiday-season-2017121812926>

If you're in crisis

**You're not alone.** If you're struggling, please reach out for help. Call your health care provider, get in touch with a trusted friend, or use one of these websites to find a local crisis line:

- <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/are-you-in-crisis/>
- <https://www.ementalhealth.ca/Ontario/Crisis-Lines-including-Telephone-Online-and-Chat/index.php?m=heading&ID=21>